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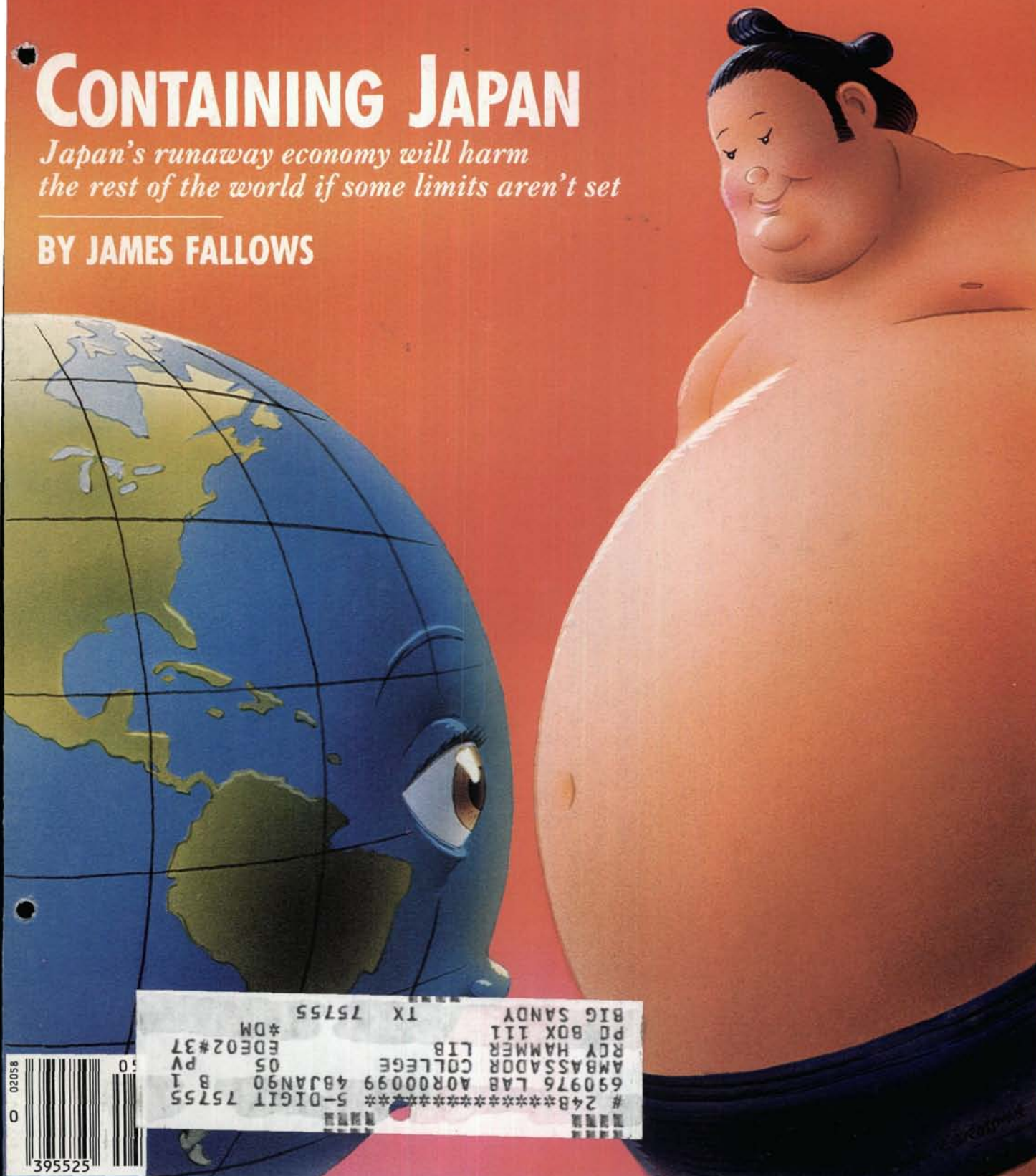
The Atlantic

200 YEARS OF REACTIONARY RHETORIC / BIRDWATCHING BY THE NUMBERS

CONTAINING JAPAN

*Japan's runaway economy will harm
the rest of the world if some limits aren't set*

BY JAMES FALLOWS



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On July 11th in Santa Barbara, California, Stephen Wilkes photographed three boys doing what boys sometimes do. When Stephen asked the one in the middle why he was standing on his hands, the one on the left said because he doesn't have any shoes.

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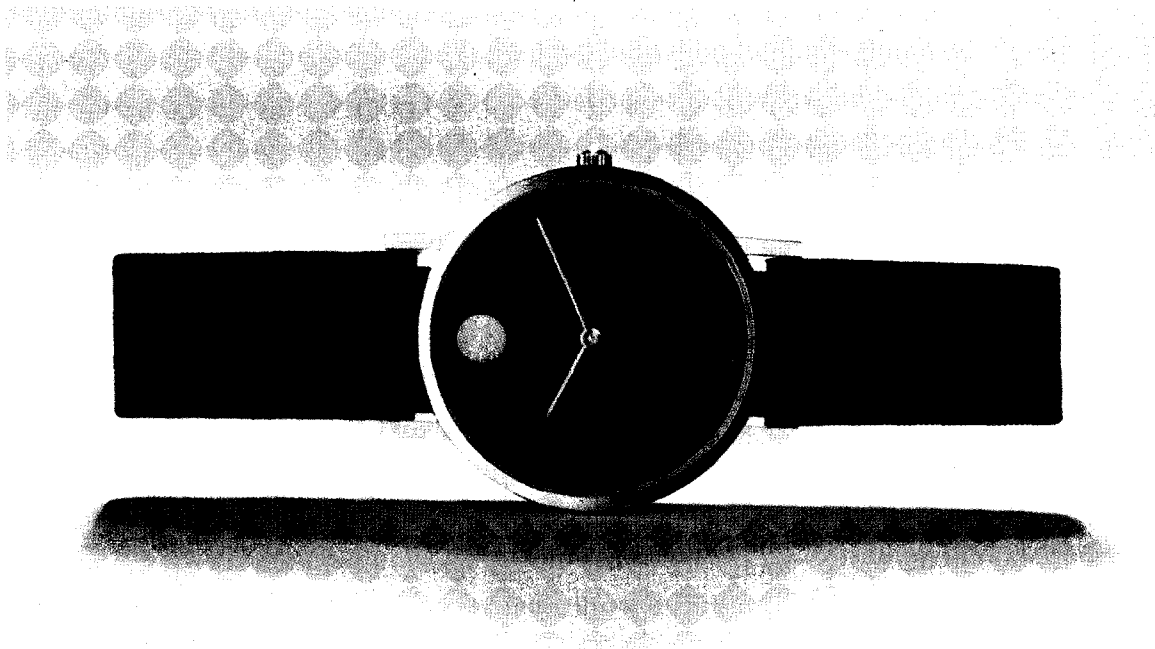
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEFICIT PROBLEMS

My only gripe with Jonathan Rauch's article "Is the Deficit Really So Bad?" (February *Atlantic*) is its relative lack of focus on the historical dimension of the deficit debate. People in and near the Heritage Foundation today claim that for a given level of spending a deficit is a good thing, because fear of the deficit then restrains the growth of government. But a decade ago, and for a century before, they and their predecessors claimed that for a given level of spending a deficit was horrible, because it lessened the pain of taxes, which was thought to restrain the growth of government.

The other side—Charles Schultze's side, say—has maintained a consistent position on deficits: the deficit should counter the business cycle, and the budget should be at least balanced over the business cycle, so that the government does not absorb private savings and retard growth. Should not Schultze receive points for consistency? The speed with which those in and near Heritage have flipped makes one wonder whether if the budget had been in surplus in 1988, they would now be telling us that for a given level of spending a surplus is an excellent thing.

Rauch's focus on the present leads him to come close to saying that whether we have a low savings rate and a large deficit—whether we take resources from those who will live in the United States a generation from now—is in the last analysis our own free choice. But we are today the nation we were a decade ago, when we elected a government pledged not to live high and reduce economic growth but to enrich our successors by accelerating growth. The failure of the policies adopted to accelerate growth cannot be consistently defended by saying that we have a right to reduce growth if we wish, for no one ever intended the reduction in growth we have achieved.

To my mind, at least, the coming decline of America relative to other nations that do save for the future is regrettable not only for the United States but for the world. For a century nations have looked to the United States as a nation to imitate as they develop. The United States

has been, in Trotsky's words, "the furnace in which the future of mankind is being forged." I am enough of a patriot to believe that the United States has been a positive example. And I fear that the nations that will be industrial leaders in the next century will not provide as positive an example—that they will be less open, less altruistic, and less free than the United States has been.

JAMES BRADFORD DE LONG

*Department of Economics
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I think Jonathan Rauch overstates the brighter aspects of the current situation. Closer examination of the numbers will make one much less certain about dismissing the crisis of the deficit.

First, Rauch seems to imply that the deficit is on a certain course of reduction. Yet the current deficit projections (upon which this assertion is made) assume *no* recession within the next five years. This is a highly implausible assumption, unless the business cycle has been repealed as a fact of economic life. Hence, when the recession does arrive, outlays will rise and tax revenues fall, thereby increasing the deficit above these projections. What Rauch needs in order to substantiate his claim is for the "structural deficit" (the deficit incurred when the economy is at full employment) to fall. Unfortunately, this is not what is occurring. Rather, above-average growth is reducing the budget deficit. And, as we all know, one cannot maintain above-average growth forever.

Second, the reported budget deficit includes the surplus in the Social Security trust fund (OASDI). Since this fund is more accurately thought of as a pension fund, separate from the general revenues of the federal government, the relevant figure is the budget deficit excluding OASDI. Making the appropriate calculations, one finds that the Congressional Budget Office projects the deficit to *rise* from \$194 billion in fiscal year 1988 to \$220 billion in fiscal year 1993.

When one takes these two factors into account, it is not at all clear that the budget deficit, and hence the national debt, are on an "arithmetically stable path," as Rauch claims. In fact, the national debt



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and our external debt will continue to rise as a ratio of GNP under any number of very plausible assumptions.

MENZIE DAVID CHINN
*Department of Economics
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Berkeley, Calif.*

Jonathan Rauch's perceptive article is admirable for the clarity with which it gets a difficult idea across: what we will forgo from our current preference for consumption over investment is some never-to-be-seen—by us, at least—future output. While those who follow us may live less well than otherwise when it comes time to pay the bill, they may still live better than we do. It is devoutly to be wished that Rauch is right, but the day of reckoning may come sooner and be more severe than he expects. The fact is, of course, that our consumption binge (measured by the declining private and public savings ratio) has been largely financed by a capital inflow. The eighties have been happy years, because the capital-account inflow has paralleled the budget deficit. We have eaten our cake and had it too, because the money

to buy more cake came from abroad in a never-ending stream.

The nirvana is not wholly coincidence. Volcker's tight money brought down inflation faster than interest rates and produced investor confidence that the United States was a good place to park capital in an uncertain world. Unless we have invented perpetual motion, however, it is too much to hope that foreigners will forever put so much capital into the United States. Some of the inflow has come from the Third World, where transferable savings are approaching exhaustion. In the wealthy industrial nations portfolio-balance considerations will come into play. Prudent investors don't put all their eggs in even a good basket. A reduction in the capital inflow not matched by a reduced demand for funds to finance the budget deficit will have painful consequences. Inflation or domestic interest rates, perhaps both, will increase. This will worsen the problem by increasing the deficit and the need to borrow. How serious the consequences will be depends on how permanent the deficit is perceived to be and to what extent a continuing deficit erodes

investor confidence in the United States.

We could see a rapid reversal in our economic stability, and we will feel it before our children do. The effects will be more immediate and more palpable than the breaking of a covenant.

LAWRENCE J. KENNON
Berkeley, Calif.

The piece by Jonathan Rauch on the deficit reminds me of the old story about the man who fell off the Empire State Building. As he passed the thirty-fifth floor, he said to a window washer, "Okay so far."

CHARLES E. McCLUNG
South Laguna, Calif.

What bothers me about the federal budget deficit is that money spent on interest could be spent doing other things, such as housing the homeless, solving the problem of waste disposal, providing low-cost loans to make higher education affordable, producing safe and efficient fuel, and implementing further tax cuts. As Jonathan Rauch suggests, the deficit may play second fiddle



to other economic maladies like inflation and unemployment. However, imagine what the country could do with the \$170 billion we spend to pay off our debt. The deficit is a "national embarrassment"; it is a constant reminder of wonderful opportunities foregone.

GARRY R. SANDERS
Rochester, N.Y.

Jonathan Rauch's article made the federal budget deficit clearer to me, a non-economist. But what I hoped to find in his article, and didn't, was that the budget deficit is troublesome because it sends a message from the President and Congress to U.S. citizens that the citizens can spend their way to prosperity by simply pushing the pain of paying the tab further down the yellow brick road. Another troublesome message sent is that the citizens should seriously consider continuing their borrowing and spending to fuel the economy, because if they were ever to subdue such frivolity, it could be someone's business (job) that collapses (disappears) when the resultant downturn occurs. Borrow and spend, and we can expect to prosper;

per; save and invest, and we will perish.

How can Rauch expect to temper doomsayer exclamations when he addresses public debt while ignoring its impact on private debt?

FRANK E. WESTMORELAND II
St. Louis, Mo.

Jonathan Rauch brings to the public's attention the myriad competing short-term and long-term goals and the softness of socioeconomic and political data surrounding the balance-the-budget debate. The key, however, is Herbert Stein's observation, "I don't think that [the American people] realize what was going on." The problem is one of voter education, information, and understanding. The federal government is not currently able to define its budget, much less determine if it is balanced. The assumptions and estimations in the budget are at best risky and at worst deceptive. During one short period the Congressional Budget Office revised its five-year deficit estimate by an astounding \$400 billion.

For many of the reasons given by Rauch, I believe we need a balanced

federal budget. A constitutional amendment to balance the budget and to limit spending is essential. But a first step must be to require that the financial reports and annual budget of the federal government be presented to the public periodically, using generally accepted accounting principles. It is only when the magnitude of accrued but currently unfunded liabilities is clearly explained to the voting public that they will be able to make well-informed decisions about public spending. After all, we can't have a balanced budget if we can't define it in the first place.

JERRY SCHENKEN
Omaha, Nebr.

Jonathan Rauch replies:

Mr. De Long, noting that we save less than most of our industrial competitors, predicts relative decline for America. Many things determine the fate of nations besides saving behavior, but it is probably true that, other things being equal, saving less today increases the risk that the growth in American prosperity will fall behind that of other nations.



VIEW FROM THE DEMPSTER HIGHWAY, YUKON

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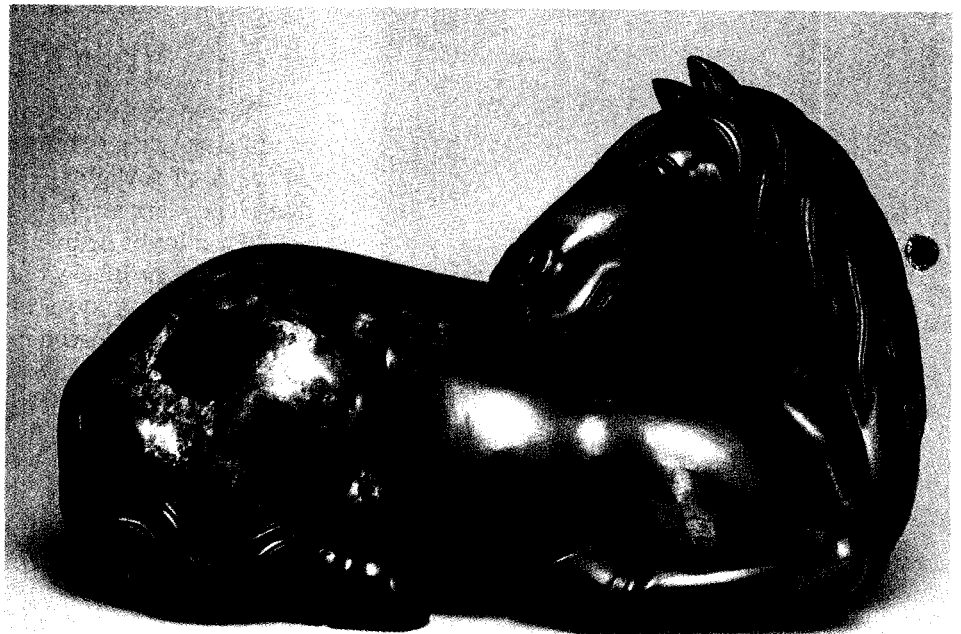
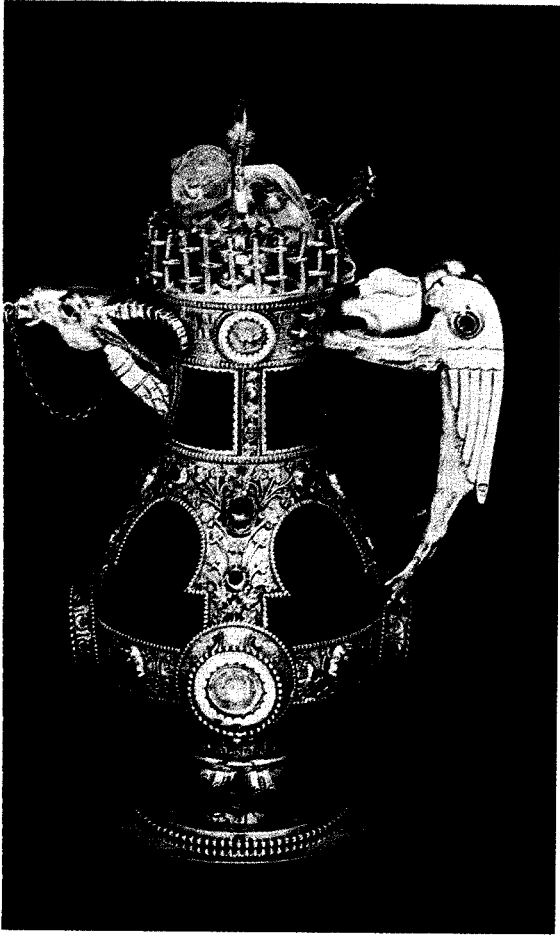
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(Clockwise Top Left) DECANTER, 1865, William Burges. THE LAST OF ENGLAND, 1860, Ford Madox Brown. TWO MEN'S HEADS, circa 1600, Camillo Procaccini. (Bottom Right) CHARLES, 7TH EARL OF NORTHAMPTON, 1758, Pompeo Batoni. RECUMBENT HORSE, 17th-century Chinese, black and grey jade. VASE OF FLOWERS WITH A MONKEY, circa 1635, Ambrosius II Brosschaert

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One risk the country runs with its big budget deficits, as Mr. Chinn points out, is of having a hard time affording Social Security benefits early in the next century, when the Baby Boom generation retires. That's what the Social Security surplus issue is about: we take in more tax money for Social Security than we currently spend on it, but instead of saving the excess for future retirees, we spend it on general government.

Mr. Kennon says that foreigners will not continue to finance large American budget deficits forever, which is also probably true. If they stop, we Americans will have to cut back on the share of our national income that we spend for consumption or cut back on the rate of investment in this country. Either or both of those things might happen through a gradual process of adjustment, or they might happen through the kind of destabilizing crisis of which Mr. Kennon speaks. Again, that's the risk we take.

I don't for a minute wish to dismiss any of these risks as insignificant. I merely wish to point out that to decry a policy as posing risks is to make only half an argument. The question is not whether the deficit is dangerous but whether it's more or less dangerous than the available alternatives—a tax increase, reductions in military spending or Social Security benefits, or whatever. That is the nature of the choice before us. The United States is not very much like Mr. McClung's man falling from a tall building and sure to come to a sad end. We are more like the man smoking cigarettes who must decide whether the *risk* of dying earlier (some smokers live to a healthy old age, after all) is an acceptable price for the pleasure of puffing.

WOUNDED HEALERS

I was both surprised and enlightened by Thomas Maeder's article "Wounded Healers" (January *Atlantic*). I was surprised to find that anyone considered the assertion that therapists are more disturbed than other people a joke. I have always held that view to be nearly axiomatic. More important, I gained genuine understanding of an incident in my life that has perplexed me since it occurred. More than twenty-five years ago a psychology professor I had just met at a party told me, in a casual conversation, that though I was unaware of it, I

was not happy. I now realize the poor fellow had just found out he was not happy and, no doubt out of pure altruism, was trying to save me the trouble of being misguidedly happy for who knows how long.

JOHN LOUTON
New Delhi, India

Of course, every profession has its share of people who are attracted to it by wrong reasons (that is, reasons that are right for themselves only). Having been the chief of staff of a psychiatric clinic for many decades, I can certainly confirm from experience that some would-be healers are disturbed, are addicted to adoration, brook no contradictions, and use their therapeutic power for personal, emotional, and other advantage, although their training is specifically directed to recognize and reduce their narcissism in the treatment situation.

However, this is still a far cry from stating, as Thomas Maeder does, "Something is a bit odd about people who proclaim 'I want to help other people'—the underlying assumption being that they are in a position to help and that others will want to be helped by them." Not only is this assumption true but it is also the basis of all civilized communal living. There is indeed a great need for generous and resourceful help, because, God (and the world) knows, innumerable people need help badly and not much effective help is available. I believe that something is a bit (and more than a bit) odd about people who never had the impulse to help, because to me they seem to be lacking in some essential attributes of humanity. In any case, I, for one, am willing to take my chances with those presumably afflicted with the "crazy" compassionate desire to care for and help others in need, rather than with the self-satisfied and tough representatives of "me-only" egotism who not only ignore the suffering of others but also consider those who don't as freakish and peculiar.

FREDERICK J. HACKER, M.D.
Los Angeles, Calif.

A more relevant issue is whether or not psychotherapy works, and I am concerned that Thomas Maeder did not review therapeutic-outcome studies. If he had, he would have discovered that 75 percent of clients improve as a result of therapy. This percentage is supported by controlled, scientific research of

25,000 cases (Smith and Glass, "Meta-analysis of Psychotherapy Outcome Studies," *American Psychologist*, 1977) and is not a matter of mere opinion. The remarkable aspect of the 75 percent figure is that the psychotherapist, unlike the engineer, automobile mechanic, or dentist, has little or no control over the multitude of factors affecting the client. Psychotherapy does work, in spite of "neurotic" reasons sensationalized by Maeder.

GEORGE E. LETCHWORTH
*Clinical psychologist
Canfield, Ohio*

Thomas Maeder's article is intellectually and literarily superb, as well as a timely revelation of certain complexities of the therapeutic process little known to analysts, clients, and the public—and, indeed, to far too many therapists. My only reservation about this exceptionally well-written and unusually thoughtful article is that therapists' "real reason for the lack of friendships" is far less their living vicariously through patients than their difficulty in making friendships that would dispense with their unconscious need to turn to patients for attention, however it may be expressed.

EDWARD M. LEVINE
*Northwestern University
Evanston, Ill.*

I train men and women to be psychiatrists. The people who elect to enter this field are no more or less neurotic than any other professionals. The only thing unusual about them is their capacity for caring. They hardly deserve to be the object of Thomas Maeder's witch-hunt.

CHARLES A. WELCH, M.D.
*Massachusetts General Hospital
Boston, Mass.*

As a social worker, I have spent the past decade trying to remain sane in a variety of insane work situations. With each job I always thought to myself, "This time it'll be different. This time the people I work with will be sensitive, secure folks who will be more concerned about the patients than themselves." But inevitably things were always the same: power wars, hostile turf battles, discrimination, egos always on the line . . . no wonder I always felt beaten up by the end of the day. Time and again I'd come home with stories beyond belief; my husband would always ask,

"How can people in a profession dedicated to helping others be so cruel and insensitive?" I'd always reply with an exasperated "I don't know." Every job I've had in this field has ended horribly. I wonder if I am crazy, instead of them. But in my most recent job experience I realized that mental-health professionals, like lawyers, are very skilled at turning everything one says or does into something quite different—to the point where I began questioning my every move, my every word. Now that I'm not surrounded by pathological co-workers every day, I can clearly see that I am not the crazy one. I guess the only crazy thing about me is expecting normalcy out of a very crazy profession. Thank you, Thomas Maeder, for being brave enough to write the truth.

MARY T. SHANNON, M.S.W.
Golden Valley, Minn.

Thomas Maeder ignores the two issues that I believe to be of greatest relevance in understanding practitioners of psychotherapy. The more obvious of these is that people who are not very good at what they do can be expected to

be a frustrated and irritable lot. This is not necessarily a reflection upon the intelligence, training, or skill of the practitioner, though these things are all relevant; rather, many psychotherapists are regularly engaged in efforts that most reasonable people would regard as futile. Thus both good practitioners dealing with impossible patients and obsolete practitioners mishandling promising cases are apt to be exposed to conditions generative of irritation and unhappiness. I believe that all other things being equal, practitioners who in their heart of hearts regard themselves as effective problem-solvers are no more likely to appear pathological than a similarly selected group of farmers or gynecologists.

Second, psychotherapists are no less likely to change during the course of their careers than are other people. Pu-erile curiosity had a great deal to do with what propelled me into a clinical-psychology career at age twenty-one. As my career developed, of course, I had the good sense and natural inclination to cloak this curiosity with the idea of service to my fellow man. Finding the service motivation to be only intermittently

sustaining, I fortunately discovered that the pursuit of certain questions of scientific interest was even more satisfying than finding out about the lives of strangers. Discovering that human behavior is not an utterly random process, and that certain calculated maneuvers can have reasonably predictable results, was intoxicating. That one could also win admiration and social status as a consequence of having a lot of fun made the profession most attractive. Somewhat later I discovered that if I played my cards right, I could even make a reasonably good living at it.

DAVID S. GLOSSER
University of Pennsylvania
School of Medicine
Philadelphia, Pa.

READING POETRY ALOUD

Three cheers for Richard Brodhis's attempts to revive the practice of reading aloud from classic poetry ("Poetry Out Loud," February *Atlantic*); a mighty raspberry for his predictable swipe at Milton: "While what Milton

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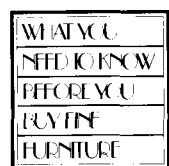
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did is splendid, it really isn't English." This judgment, traceable to the grinding of axes by the royalist Samuel Johnson and the "metaphysical" T. S. Eliot, has achieved stony rigor in survey courses; Milton's role as Eng. Lit. whipping boy was familiar even to the makers of *Animal House*.

The adventurous reader or listener finds that Milton is a great *aural* poet, who can describe melancholy solitude with delicate music ("glowing embers through the room/Teach light to counterfeit a gloom") or narrate with heart-stopping metrical brilliance a vision of the dead wife whom his blindness had prevented him from seeing: "But oh, as to embrace me she inclin'd,/I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night." Did Keats ever surpass the aural beauty of Milton's lines on Adam's reaction to Eve's fall: "From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve/Down dropped, and all the faded roses shed"?

STEPHEN FALLON
South Bend, Ind.

Although I wholeheartedly endorse Richard Brookhiser's case for reading poetry out loud, I was surprised by his parting shot. He misused a quote from Keats's "Ode on A Grecian Urn" ("Heard melodies are sweet . . .") to neatly tie up his argument. Had he read on, he would have found that the entire phrase is "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter."

Perhaps Brookhiser should pay more attention to the poetry as he holds forth to others.

BRIAN SIMPSON
Panama City, Fla.

WHERE BOYS ARE

Brad Edmondson and Blayne Cutler's feature "Where the Boys Are" (February *Atlantic*) rankles as naive and phallocentric. The authors are observant enough to count out gay men, but then they crow hysterically that 15 percent of urban women don't have enough men from whom to choose.

Evidently it doesn't occur to Edmondson and Cutler that 15 percent of the urban female population may not want a male partner. If 10 percent of America's population is gay or lesbian, and a substantial proportion of gay Americans live in urban areas, then it is possible that those very 15 percent of women over whom Edmondson and

Cutler are worrying their pretty little heads are perfectly happy to choose companions from among themselves.

SUSANA C. DARWIN
Skokie, Ill.

Where the Girls Are: A good woman is hard to find in San Diego. But New York City is teeming with women, and so is Durham, North Carolina. A hundred years after the closing of the American frontier, it looks as though young men will have to head back east to seek a different kind of opportunity.

SUSAN DAKIN
Durham, N.C.

NON-OFFENSIVE DEFENSE

Jack Beatty ("Reagan's Gift," February *Atlantic*) says that conventional-arms-control talks are stalled partly because we do not have a clear vision of what we want to achieve. The deadlock might be broken by a concept that has been increasing in popularity in recent years, which is that the two sides should agree to restructure their forces so that each side is stronger in defense than the other is in offense. This approach, which is often called non-offensive defense, could make possible considerable arms reductions while still maintaining security. And there is a good chance that we could achieve a treaty along these lines, because Gorbachev has been championing non-offensive defense in the past year.

LES BRUNSWICK
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Jack Beatty replies:

Mr. Brunswick is ahead of me: we will devote an entire article to this issue in the June *Atlantic*.

CLAPPING FOR JAZZ

Gosh, here I've been going to jazz clubs since I was fifteen years old, and in all that time I've *always* applauded the individual musicians after their solos, on the grounds that this was a good way to show my appreciation for the improvisation I'd just heard. How naive could I be? Now I find out, from the otherwise estimable Francis Davis ("Blowing In From Chicago," February *Atlantic*) that I and everyone else in those clubs have been acting like rubes all these years. All we're doing is "passing the time" until the next soloist gets

"hot." How awful! Meanwhile, truly sophisticated listeners (like Mr. Davis, no doubt) don't applaud until the entire song is finished. Well, whaddya know.

I do have one question: When the musicians nod their heads, as they often do, in acknowledgment of our applause, is that because they're rubes too? Or have they just been humoring us?

JOSEPH NOCERA
*Northampton, Mass.**

Francis Davis replies:

Mr. Nocera, who writes as if he believed that my comments were directed against him personally, fails to acknowledge that there are many different kinds of jazz, including some for which applause after solos is appropriate, and some in which it is a distraction. He also fails to consider that such applause is often obligatory, not heartfelt.

MAKING FRIENDS ABROAD

I am amazed anew at the average American's need to have "packaged" goods. Reading Barbara Wallraff's article "People Who Meet People" (January *Atlantic*), one would think ordinary human interactions were forbidden. Anyone who has done any serious travel can tell you about friends made "on the road."

Of course, if one has forgotten how to make friends at home, then it will certainly be difficult abroad. But in fact people in other countries are much friendlier than here, extremely curious about Americans, and eager to take them home and share their cultural differences. One can strike up a conversation anywhere—at a café, in the market, or on a park bench—and fan up a flame of friendship with no trouble at all. Addresses from friends of friends don't hurt either. With the slimmest reference one is immediately treated like family everywhere in the world.

I was shocked to discover in Wallraff's article that there are now agencies to handle the making of friends. Please spare us from more organizations. People of like mind can always find each other in like places. Surely we do not need third parties, be they human or computer, between us and the world.

ITA KOHN
Littleton, Colo.

Barbara Wallraff replies:

Would that more of us shared Ms. Kohn's facility with people.

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DEMOGRAPHICS

May 1, May Day, celebrated since the 1880s as a day of proletarian solidarity; members of the Communist Party of the United States of America will mark the occasion with gatherings at a score of sites nationwide. How many Communists are there in America? According to Carol Marks, an assistant to Gus Hall, the general secretary of the CPUSA, the party has 20,000 to 25,000 dues-paying, card-carrying members, and more than a million active supporters. A spokeswoman for the CIA answered the same question this way: "The CIA does not put out that information." Those who would see a Communist "behind every tree" should take heart: the amount of land in the United States under forest cover declined by 10 million acres from 1977 to 1987.

FOOD

May is a peak month for harvesting sweet onions; the per capita consumption of onions in general has risen by more than 40 percent over the past two decades. The various kinds of sweet onions, which are produced mainly in Georgia, Texas, California, Washington, and Hawaii, have been surging in popularity. The best-known sweet onions are Vidalia onions, which are produced in and around Vidalia, Georgia. Vidalia onions have a higher sugar content than Coca-Cola, and they don't make you cry. In 1986 the Georgia legislature made the "misrepresentation of a Vidalia Onion" a felony, punishable by up to three years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.



ARTS & LETTERS

May 12, Limerick Day, which is observed on the birthday of Edward Lear. Limericks are "perhaps . . . the *only* original verse form of the English language," according to William S. Baring-Gould, in *The Lure of the Limerick*. Examples of the form have been attributed to Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, though the earliest known verses that qualify as true limericks did not appear until 1820. Lear's *Book of Nonsense* (1846), *Punch*, and, in 1907–1908, a rash of newspaper and magazine contests in England engraved limericks on the public consciousness: they were taken up by poets, statesmen, and clerics, whose compositions fell into the categories printable and un-. Arguments rage to the present day over whether the first category is even worthy of notice. In the words of E. O. Parrott, the editor of *The Penguin Book of Limericks*:

"The limerick's birth is unclear; Its GENESIS owed much to Lear. It started as clean, But soon went obscene, And this split haunts its later career."



HEALTH & SAFETY

By month's end poison ivy, to which about half the population is allergic, will be in full bloom in every place that it grows in the United States. The oil that poison ivy secretes, urushiol, which causes a rash in man, is easily spread from person to person, though generally not through skin-to-skin contact; contaminated clothing (which, insidiously, can transmit urushiol to uncontaminated clothing in the washing machine) is a major culprit. Poison ivy has no medicinal value; attempts in the past by American Indians to use poison ivy to treat warts and tumors were unavailing.



Q & A

Does it really make sense to run in out of the rain, or will you end up bumping into more raindrops than you avoid?

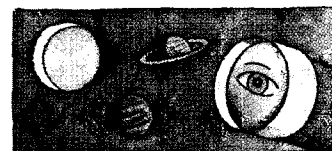
To most of us, common sense dictates a breakneck dash, although some argue for a rigidly upright walk (to minimize the exposed surface area). To lay this controversy to rest, the Italian physicist Alessandro de Angelis has calculated the rate of saturation of people moving through vertical rain at various speeds. His computations undermine the case for careful, slow movement; more surprisingly, they also suggest that running very, very fast is probably not worth the effort. While a person walking briskly, at 3 meters per second, stays substantially drier than one who strolls leisurely, he gets only 10 percent wetter than someone sprinting at 10 meters per second—the pace of a world-class run. Whether rational analysis is likely to prevail over reflex is another question entirely.

ENVIRONMENT

This month Knowlton's cactus, the rarest cactus species in the United States, is blooming on a piece of Nature Conservancy land in New Mexico. Its exact location is kept secret. The Center for Plant Conservation, a private nonprofit organization that links botanical gardens and arboreta across the country, has recently estimated that as many as one percent of the nation's plant species may vanish in the next five years. Plants are proving harder to protect than animals are. Federal and state



laws tend to follow a principle of British common law whereby game is considered to be the property of the Crown, and plants are considered to be the property of the person who owns the land they grow on. When the U.S. government began listing endangered species, in 1967, there was no provision for the listing of plants; even now the list contains half again as many animals as plants. And yet, given the prospect of global warming, which will require adaptations in the plants we rely on for food, among other things, maintaining genetic diversity in the planet's flora may prove to be more important in the long run than saving the whales and gorillas.



THE SKIES

May 5, New Moon. 5–6, the Eta Aquarid meteor showers peak. 13, observatories around the country celebrate Astronomy Day, and most will be open to the public; check local papers. 20, Full Moon, also known this month as the Milk or Mother's Moon. Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn are all visible this month.

50 YEARS AGO

A. A. Milne, writing in the May, 1939, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "What distinguishes Cambridge from Oxford, broadly speaking, is that nobody who has been to Cambridge feels impelled to write about it. If it is not quite true that everybody has at least one book inside him, it seems to be the fact that every Oxonian has at least one book about Oxford inside him, and generally gets it out. Oxford men will say that this shows what a much more inspiring place Oxford is, and Cambridge men will say that it shows how much less quickly Oxford men grow up, and we can leave it at that."

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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES WHODUNIT?

WHEN MUSLIM GIRLS of Upper Egypt not long ago discovered what was said to be the sign of the cross on their veils, alarm spread throughout the country. A Cairo newspaper described the two principal explanations making the rounds:

Some people said that Christians had sprayed a chemical on the veiled women's clothes and this material assumed the form of a small cross no larger than an ant; as soon as the clothing was moistened, the size of the cross would increase to about three centimeters. Some people offered another interpretation, which held that the cloth of the head covering had been imported from Israel and that it was scientifically treated to form crosses with the purpose of stirring up dissension between Muslims and Christians.

Bizarre as such an episode may seem to many in the West, it is hardly so by the standards of the Middle East, where the idea of topsy-turvy international conspiracy permeates political thinking and influences the course of events. Welcome to a world in which Libya's Muammar Qaddafi is deemed by Baghdad radio to be "subservient" to the United States and Israel, in which a Saudi Arabian king holds that Zionists are behind the Palestinian terrorists, in which Turkey's Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is denounced by an Egyptian newspaper as a crypto-Jew, a *dönme*, the argument being that he imposed secularism on his Muslim country to punish the Turks for

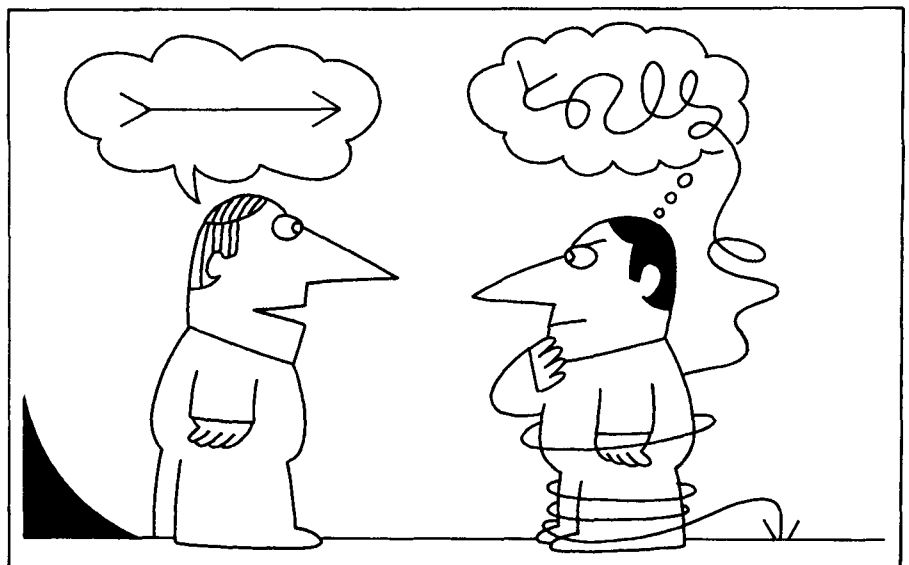
not ceding Palestine to the Jews. When the Jordanian chargé d'affaires disappeared in Beirut in 1981, Syria pointed the finger at . . . Jordan. Jordan, according to Radio Damascus, "has an interest in the kidnapping incident and in exploiting it to deceive public opinion and divert the attention of the Jordanian people from what is taking place in Jordan." In 1986 a newspaper in Bahrain called the recent incident in which a TWA airliner was blown up by hijackers "the clearest example of the West's enmity to the Arabs."

These are not isolated examples. A belief in the existence of malevolent conspiracies suffuses Middle Eastern discourse. And yet, as one specialist on the region, L. Carl Brown, noted a few years ago, "this pervasive Middle Eastern attitude has rarely been studied in a systematic way." Such neglect is probably a mistake. The search for the hidden hand closely reflects the trauma of the modern Middle East.

AMONG ARABS, THE inability to destroy tiny Israel has prompted the belief that sinister forces must be backing the Jewish state. While some Arab commentators have made serious critiques of the military defeats, especially after the setbacks the Arabs suffered in 1948 and 1967, most governments and writers prefer to ignore actual circumstances and blame outside powers to explain their losses.

One theory holds that the West perpetuates the Arab-Israeli conflict as a way to control the Middle East. Just after the 1973 war an Arab Jerusalemite explained to an Israeli journalist, "The Americans arrange everything. In '56 they sent the British and the French to wallop Egypt, and in '67 they helped you beat the Egyptians and the Syrians. Today you have a very big country, and the Americans felt you should be cut down to size. So they decided to help the Egyptians beat you."

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Adnan Khashoggi took an even more extreme view. In the 1970s, when oil producers were in the midst of boom times, he declared: "It is obvious. Oil is power. Cash is power. I say God help America and Europe when we unite with the Jews. Then we can really run the show. You could wake up one morning and find yourself occupied by an Arab-Israeli nation."

A second theory about the origins of the Middle East conflict involves Soviet-American collusion to use the threat of Israel as a way of creating a market for weapons in the Arab states. A third theory, based on the spurious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, posits a Jewish plot to use Israel as a base for taking control of the entire world. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia for over half a century vehemently maintained the truth of the *Protocols*, distributing them far and wide. He asserted that "Zionism is the mother of Communism. . . . It's all part of a great plot, a grand conspiracy. Communism . . . is a Zionist creation designed to fulfill the aims of Zionism. They are only pretending to work against each other." According to Richard Nixon, "Faisal saw Zionist and Communist conspiracies everywhere around him."

The most notable consequence of Faisal's unwillingness to accept facts at face value came in 1969. On August 21 of that year a deranged Australian Christian by the name of Rohan (which the Saudis turned into Cohen) set fire to the Mosque of al-Aqsa, the holiest Islamic shrine in Jerusalem. Though the Israelis extinguished the fire quickly and Rohan confessed, Faisal was convinced that Jews had caused the incident. More remarkable, he was able to mobilize virtually every Muslim head of state to accept this view, and thereby achieved his long-sought dream—the first-ever summit meeting of Muslim leaders, including even some of the most radical ones.

Needless to say, many Arabs see Israeli agents and strategic thinking in every corner. When the Israeli government miscalculated in 1976 and took steps that enhanced the PLO's standing on the West Bank, pro-Jordanian elements suspected a deliberate Israeli maneuver; the PLO's advance meant that Jerusalem could plausibly argue it had no negotiating partner on the West Bank. The best newspaper in Egypt, *al-Ahram*, speculated in May of 1983 that Israeli agents were behind the Hitler-diaries hoax in Germany. Why would Israel do this? Because the hoax reminded the

world of the Jews' persecution and diverted "the world's attention from the tragedy that Israel is inflicting on the Arabs."

IRAN IS PROBABLY the country where the conspiratorial imagination has evolved to its most advanced state. Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi, who ruled from 1941 to 1979, often succumbed to this way of thinking, as he made abundantly clear in his autobiography, *Answer to History*. The Shah interpreted his spectacular downfall as a result of an "unholy alliance of Red and Black"—of Marxists and mullahs. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini emerged as a political leader in June of 1963 owing to "secret dealings with foreign agents." Indeed, Khomeini owed his title of ayatollah to "radio stations run by atheist *émigrés* belonging to the Tudeh [Iranian Communist] Party." Four other actors also participated in the plot against the Shah: the media, the major oil companies, and the British and American governments. Central Intelligence Agency involvement probably had begun by 1962, when the Shah, visiting San Francisco, saw an airplane streamer overhead with the slogan "Need a fix, see the Shah."

As the demonstrations against him mounted, the Shah continued to think them the work of a mischievous element—and that "popular support for the crown ran strong and deep." By making it easy to hide from unpleasant facts, conspiracy theories encouraged him to underestimate the strength of the opposition, contributing to his misreading of the situation and, therefore, to his fall.

Years after the Shah's fall and death, his supporters continue to think along these lines. Gary Sick, who was a member of the National Security Council staff during the hostage crisis, relates his experience with the many "sophisticated, well-educated Iranians whose inevitable question would be, 'Why did the United States want to bring Khomeini to power?'" Princess Ashraf, the Shah's sister, subscribed to this outlook. She once explained why:

It happened the same thing with my father. It happened the same thing with my brother. There are foreigners who saw that Iran was becoming very important . . . and Iran in ten years' time would be another Japan. They couldn't afford another Japan in Asia.

The Shah's opposition thought along similar lines, and this made for some strange intersections. Take a single incident—the demonstrations that met the Shah when he visited Washington in November of 1977. Anti- and pro-Shah marchers confronted one another near the White House, at first verbally, then physically. To separate battling Iranians on the Ellipse, the police resorted to tear gas, some of which wafted over to the White House lawn, where, at that very moment, President Jimmy Carter was welcoming the Shah to the United States. The ceremonies had to be completed between fits of coughing, and pictures in the media showed the leaders wiping tears from their eyes.

The Shah charged that his opponents wore masks not, as they claimed, for protection against SAVAK, his secret police, but because "the masks hid non-Iranian demonstrators—professional troublemakers hired on the spot. . . . Most of them were young Americans—blonds, blacks, Puerto Ricans, together with some Arabs. Moreover, there was foreign money involved in paying their bills." As for the opposition view, one leader later observed that "when the dissidents learned of the tear-gas incident on the White House lawn, they reasoned that such an event could have occurred only at the President's behest. Thus they quickly concluded that Carter had abandoned the Shah and launched a series of protest demonstrations and meetings [in Iran]." American officials entirely missed the connection between the ceremony in Washington and the disturbances in Iran.

The Islamic Republic of Iran may be unique in having a constitution that mentions conspiracies, which it does twice. The preamble refers to the White Revolution (the Shah's land-reform program) as an "American plot . . . a ploy to stabilize the foundations of the colonialist government [of the Shah] and strengthen Iran's . . . ties with world imperialism." A second reference promises good treatment of non-Muslim Iranians as long as they "do not get involved . . . in conspiracies hatched against the Islamic Republic of Iran." Conspiracies are essential to the routine of daily politics, too. Here, from Prime Minister Mir Husayn Musavi, is the sort of statement that keeps reappearing in speeches by Iranian politicians: "The history of the nation's steadfastness in the face of conspiracies both great and small by the sworn enemies of the revolution has made it easi-

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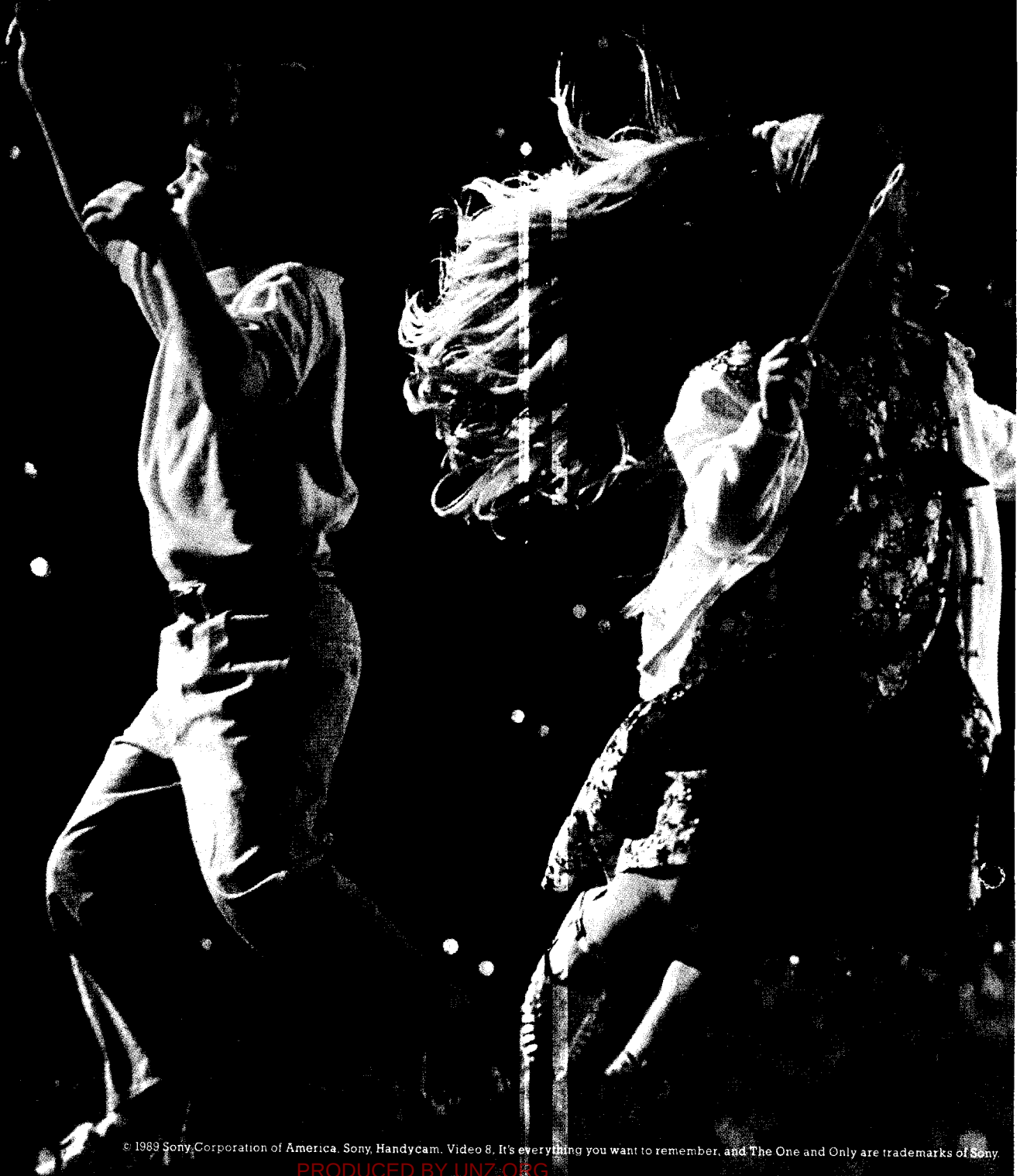
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er for us to resist and withstand all devious and extensive conspiracies." One reason for the takeover of the American embassy in Tehran was to ferret out the "den of espionage" controlling all these activities; but some Iranians who opposed the takeover argued that even it was part of a conspiracy. They held that Washington had arranged for the seizure of its own diplomats as hostages to isolate Iran internationally.

Iranians are not above discerning foreign influences on a more mundane level, as exemplified in this *New York Times* dispatch:

A Teheran taxi driver explained that he thought the city's notorious traffic jams were the handiwork of American agents. "They get people to do unnecessary things and make the drivers frustrated and lose their temper," he said.

It should come as no surprise that Ayatollah Khomeini's recent campaign against Salman Rushdie and his book *The Satanic Verses* was premised on fears of an American conspiracy. Although Rushdie has nothing to do with the United States—he is a Muslim of Indian origin living in England—the Iranian government called his book a "provocative American deed" and dubbed him "an inferior CIA agent." Another account asserted that *The Satanic Verses* was published at the request of the British intelligence services.

Even more recently a bomb destroyed a car belonging to the captain of the U.S. naval ship that eight months earlier had shot down an Iranian civilian jetliner. Tehran's media characterized the incident, for which most observers blamed Iran, as an FBI plot to "demonize" the Islamic Republic.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES are hardly unique to the Muslim Middle East; they exist wherever public life is under stress. Nazi ideology relied heavily on this way of thinking, as did the Soviet government under Joseph Stalin. In the United States, too, a tradition of conspiratorial thinking goes back generations. What distinguishes the Middle East from these other examples is the mainstream quality of arguments about conspiracies. In the West conspiracy theories are the hallmark of the fringe; in the Middle East they are espoused by the foremost politicians, religious leaders, intellectuals, and journalists.

Though in some ways amusing, con-

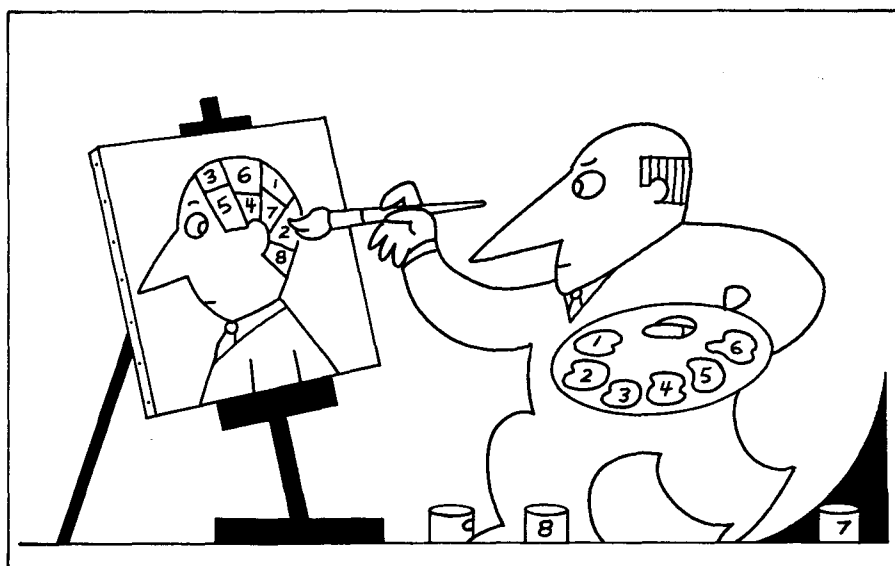
spiracy theories are a deadly serious phenomenon. At the most general level, not confronting realities means not facing critical problems, much less solving them. If oral contraceptives are part of a plot to reduce the number of Muslims, how will Egypt contain its population? If foreign investment is intended to prevent Muslims from achieving self-sufficiency, industrialization will suffer. If foreign visitors are spies, relations with the outside world must be severely restricted. How can the concept of loyal opposition survive the suspicion that one's opponent is actually an agent for a great and malevolent power? In the Muslim world, it generally does not.

Conspiracies also spawn their own form of political discourse, complete in itself and immune to rational argument.

A devoted conspiracy theorist is like the caricature of a Freudian who can find a psychoanalytic explanation for anything, no matter how implausible. Both operate in a closed system.

Finally, as suggested by many of the examples here, the mentality of intrigue has time and again affected the specific course of politics in the Middle East. The distorting prism of conspiracy theories that colors life in much of the Muslim Middle East cannot be dismissed as a curiosity, for it is a key feature of the region's political culture. The conspiracy transforms accidental into volitional, benign into malevolent, and weak into powerful. Rumors, whispers, cabals, plots, and devils proliferate, and they count.

—Daniel Pipes



HEALTH ORDER ON THE COUCH

A major new psychiatric reference work is soon to be unveiled, and its potential consequences make many therapists uneasy

ACCORDING TO one count, some 450 varieties of psychotherapy are being practiced in the United States today. With that many approaches available to attempt to cure the 200 or so recognized psychiatric disorders, it is not surprising that mental-health-care professionals have been hard pressed to decide which therapies are effective in treating which illnesses. The choice of a treatment is

entirely up to the practitioner. "The patient is at the mercy of whoever's office he walks into," T. Byram Karasu, a professor of psychiatry at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, told me during an interview.

In all of medicine, psychiatry is the only specialty in which there are no generally accepted treatment guidelines. To remedy this situation—to bring some order to the field of mental-health care—the American Psychiatric Association several years ago began an ambitious review of the scientific literature with the object of producing a comprehensive overview of psychiatric treatments; the document has finally been completed and will be published this month. Somewhere along the way, however, many APA members began to entertain serious doubts about the project. They worried that this reference work would

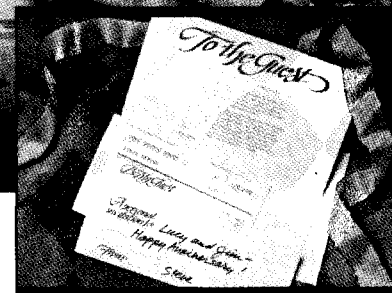
restrict their professional freedom and expose them to malpractice claims for treatments the volume did not condone. Psychiatric groups in the United States and Canada voted to urge the APA not to endorse the book, and a petition drive was launched among the APA membership to force the association to suppress it altogether. In the end the APA sought a compromise. The work, which runs to 3,000 pages, in four volumes, has turned out to be not so much a treatment manual as a lengthy discourse on treatment issues: a critical survey of the literature. And, despite the original intention, the report is no longer considered to be an official APA document. Rather, it is an "approved" APA task-force report, and APA members are in principle free to take its recommendations or leave them. Proponents of the work believe that even without the APA's imprimatur, it will substantially help to define the accepted boundaries of psychotherapeutic treatment; opponents fear that the proponents will be proved correct.

Treatments of Psychiatric Disorders (American Psychiatric Press, \$250) has come to symbolize a major debate in psychiatry which boils down to this: Is psychiatry mostly a science or mostly an art? Supporters of the book come down on the side of science, saying that enough is known about the workings of the human mind to develop guidelines for fixing it when it does not work. Opponents take the side of art, claiming that knowledge about human thought and behavior is too sketchy to begin restricting the methods used to manipulate psychological processes. Watching the debate with interest are patients, insurance companies, and malpractice lawyers, who merely by showing an interest in the proceedings have subtly influenced the direction they have taken.

THE QUEST FOR a psychiatric treatment manual began in 1982, when Daniel X. Freedman, who is currently a professor of psychiatry at the University of California at Los Angeles, and who was the APA's president at the time, set up the Task Force on Treatment of Psychiatric Disorders. Freedman was motivated largely by concern that there was no clear, cohesive description of prevailing treatments, and that such a review was needed both to help psychiatrists assess their practices and to suggest directions for future research. In addition, officials of the federal government's



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Medicare program and administrators of private insurance companies had been periodically asking the APA for a list of treatment guidelines so that they, in turn, could develop more-restrictive reimbursement procedures. Freedman picked Byram Karasu to head the project, and Karasu persuaded some 400 of his colleagues to help write, rewrite, and review the reference work's dozens of chapters.

"It's time to get the quacks out of psychotherapy, to bring psychiatry up to date with the rest of medicine," Karasu says. "Right now the public's view of psychiatry is that anything and everything goes. Most psychiatrists are ethical and do not practice that way, but there are a number of mental-health-care professionals, especially those who are not psychiatrists, who through either ignorance or arrogance treat patients with ineffective forms of psychotherapy. That is what I hope to put an end to with this book."

Basically, that was the argument made by those in favor of publishing the work as an official APA manual, a document that, together with the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Third Edition, Revised, was meant to be the APA's official word on the diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric disorders. Advances in neurochemistry and pharmacology, they say, are now driving the study of human behavior, and it is time for the profession to wake up to this fact. Psychotherapies will always play a role in the treatment of mental disorders—but only those psychotherapies that can pass clinical trials. Just as a physician cannot use a new drug or surgical technique without its first being proved effective, so should mental-health care be limited to those psychotherapies that have been proved effective. This approach, proponents of a manual say, will not limit the ethical treatment of patients, nor will it restrict the development of new techniques, which can still be tested experimentally, much as new drugs are.

Karasu is an articulate and persuasive spokesman. He never seems to get angry with the project's detractors, and he says he understands their concerns. But he blames ignorance for those concerns. The book is far from being the therapeutic cookbook that many imagine it to be, he says. It never once gives a hard and fast therapeutic rule like "For condition A, treat with therapy X, Y, or Z; all other therapies are wrong." Rather, the book

raises diagnostic issues relating to condition A, reviews the various therapies that have been tried and the results obtained, presents pertinent details from unusual individual cases, and only then discusses which treatments can be considered effective, under what circumstances. These are presented as preferred treatments, alternatives, adjuncts, and second-order treatments; taken into consideration are the needs of patients in different age groups and phases of personality development, and of those with more than one psychiatric disorder. The book also includes a thorough discussion of what is not known about various conditions and what questions need to be addressed to resolve the uncertainties that do exist.

"We haven't tried to write the definitive text on psychotherapy that sets forth rigid rules and regulations, but rather, we've tried to establish principles of treatment that can serve as guidelines," Karasu says. "This is a professional document designed to suggest useful treatment approaches for clinicians. In fact, it is designed to demonstrate the complexity of the treatment-planning process and its application, and the need for the individual psychiatrist to consider several approaches when treating a patient. I don't see how people will think this book is unreasonably restrictive, unless they practice far beyond the bounds of what is reasonable."

Proponents of the book also argue that its format will make it an important reference work for mental-health-care practitioners, particularly those who are in practice by themselves. Robert Cancro, the chairman of the department of psychiatry at New York University Medical Center and the author of the book's section on schizophrenia, says that he tried to write something that would be useful to a student or to a practitioner who does not have the advantage of being on the faculty of a major medical school. "Those of us in academia forget what it's like to be a psychiatrist in some small community where it may be harder to keep up on the latest in drug therapy, or where you can't refer a patient to a colleague when you aren't too familiar with that patient's problem," he explains. The pro-manual faction believes that the therapy guide will improve the education of new psychiatrists. Among other things, it provides multiple perspectives on psychotherapy, not the single perspective, reflecting an author's particular

school of thought, that pervades most textbooks.

With a compendium of state-of-the-art knowledge now available, practitioners will no longer be able to say they did not know that a certain treatment might prove especially promising—or that some other treatment was distinctly beyond the pale. Karasu acknowledges that, in part for this reason, *Treatments of Psychiatric Disorders* will probably bring an increase in malpractice suits against psychiatrists. But he does not think this is necessarily bad. “Why should we be interested in protecting someone who is incompetent from malpractice suits?” he asks. “Our professional behavior will come under tougher scrutiny, but I don’t believe that competent, ethical practitioners have anything to worry about.”

Overall, Karasu is proud of the book. He feels that it is a big step in a continuing process of improving psychiatric medicine. “I hope that in five years this book will be outdated and the APA will have to prepare a second edition,” he says, “and five years after that a third, and so on.”

“THIS BOOK isn’t going to strengthen psychiatry, it’s going to weaken it severely,” says Seymour Gers, the director of medical education at the Manhattan Psychiatric Center and the principal spokesman for the anti-manual contingent within the APA. “Whether or not it is called a manual, or whether or not it has the APA imprimatur, this book is going to stifle psychiatric treatment. It is going to decrease the quality of patient care. And it is going to spur an increase in malpractice suits against both good and bad psychiatrists.”

Those who oppose *Treatments of Psychiatric Disorders* argue that although psychiatry has made considerable progress in recent decades, its practitioners remain far short of consensus on what constitutes proper treatment and what does not. “Very simply, we do not know enough right now. We do not have enough of the answers,” Gers says. Many of the book’s opponents feel that treatment guidelines, no matter how broad, will retard or suppress the development of innovative therapies. James B. Wirth, the clinical director of inpatient psychiatric services at Johns Hopkins Hospital, in Baltimore, says, “We need the freedom to try new things.” Wirth and others make the point that psychiatrists are treating individuals, not groups of individuals like those on

which clinical studies are based. “Research looks at populations of people, and thus can only draw general conclusions,” Wirth says. “We should take into account what population studies tell us about appropriate treatment for a given psychiatric problem. Still, we should not be restricted by those population studies in using our clinical judgment to decide how to treat an individual patient with his own unique problem.” According to this view, behavioral problems are so much more variable than other medical maladies that the psychiatrist requires much more latitude than other physicians. The book’s opponents argue, along similar lines, that the interaction between doctor and patient is an essential part of psychiatric treatment. Maladapted behavior may be caused by faulty brain chemistry, but treatment guidelines will never be able to account for patient-physician chemistry.

The original objections to the project had as much to do with its official nature as with its content. So why are Gers and many of his colleagues still upset about the book? “Even though it no longer will say ‘official policy of the APA’ on it, this book will still be ripe for misuse,” Gers says. “All the disclaimers in the world will not prevent the book from being used in ways for which it is not intended, and anyone who thinks otherwise is foolish. Aren’t they practicing psychiatrists? Haven’t they found out by now that telling a person not to do something doesn’t always get him to stop?”

Chief among those who Gers fears may pervert the good intentions of *Treatments of Psychiatric Disorders* are malpractice lawyers and litigious patients, who, as he puts it, “will now have ammunition in the form of authoritative, documented checklist standards against which psychiatrists’ treatments will be measured by judges and juries.”

And what about insurance companies? Imagine a claims adjuster who reads in *Treatments of Psychiatric Disorders* that treatment X should alleviate condition A in six to eight months. Eight months have come and gone for a particular patient and he is still not “cured.” Should the insurance company continue paying for treatment? Such scenarios scare Gers and many other APA members. “Insurance companies and malpractice lawyers should not control the treatment patients receive, yet that is exactly what is going to happen,” Gers says.

Psychiatrists worry also that the reference book will take away their business.



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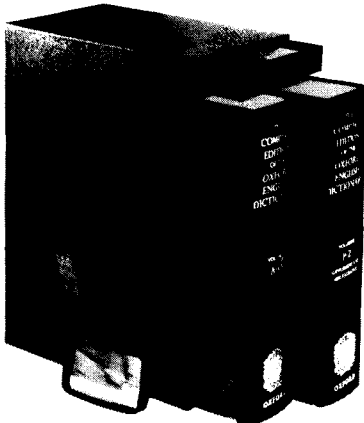
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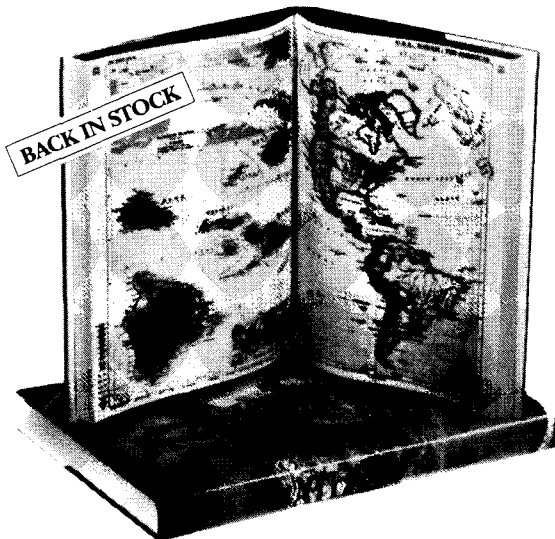
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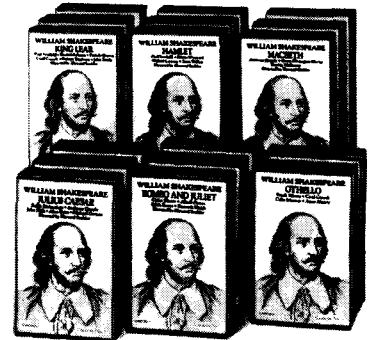
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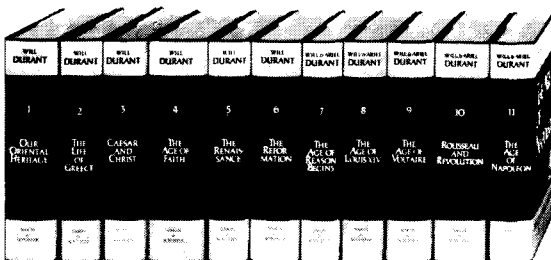
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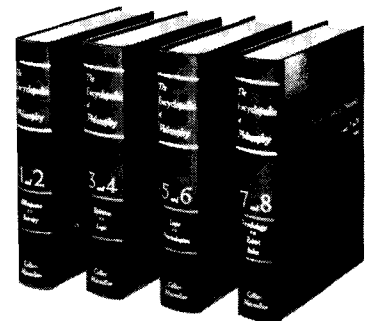
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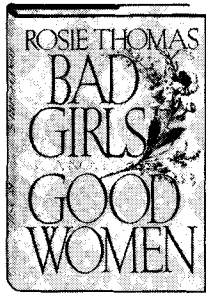
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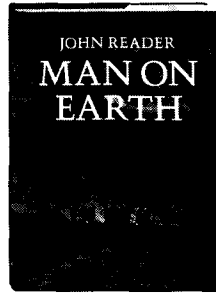
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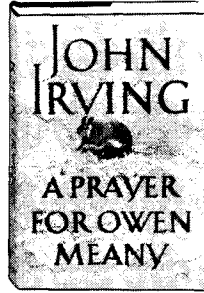
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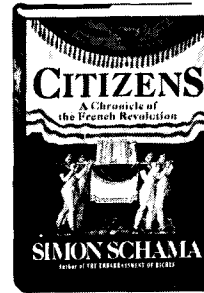
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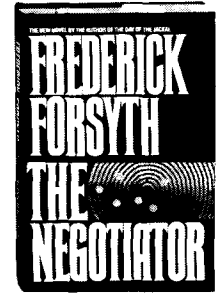
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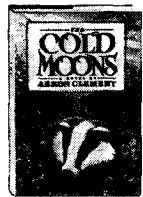
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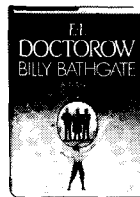
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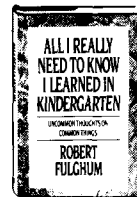
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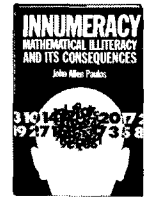
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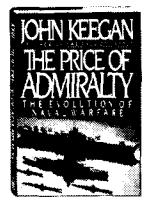
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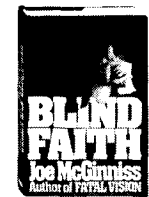
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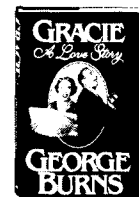
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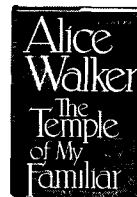
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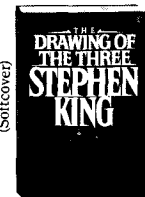
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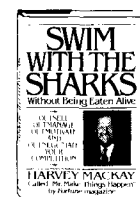
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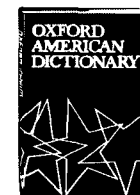
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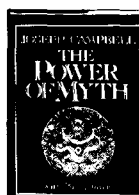
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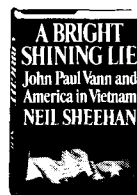
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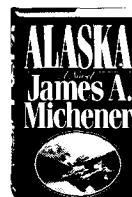
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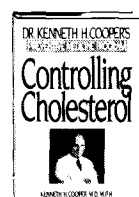
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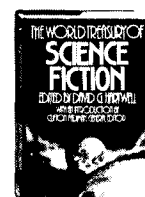
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Psychologists and other providers of mental-health care will undoubtedly buy the report and will be able to use the information in it to bypass psychiatrists altogether, particularly when drug therapy is warranted. A psychiatric nurse, for example, could ask any doctor to prescribe a recommended drug. (However, non-psychiatrists, too, worry that the manual will take away their business: they object that it is too drug-oriented and thus discriminates against them.)

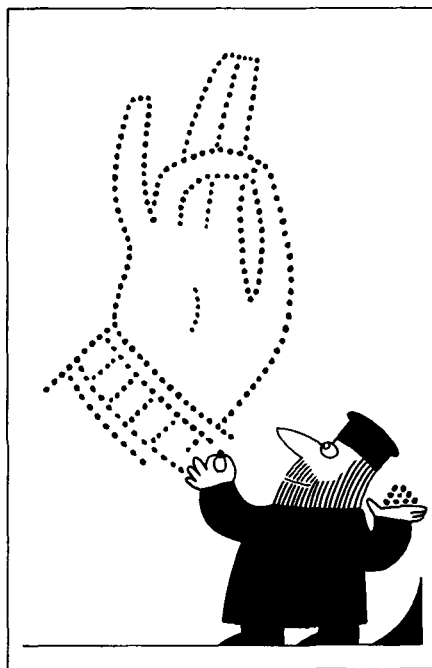
But above all, Gers believes, the book represents an unfortunate trend in mental-health care. "By setting forth these kinds of guidelines, I think we're dehumanizing psychiatry," he says. "Contrary to what the APA thinks, I don't think this is a step in the right direction, at least not with our current understanding of psychiatric disorders. Psychiatry is still an art; it still takes a great deal of interaction between patient and physician. This book de-emphasizes that interaction, and therefore I see it as something bad for the profession and bad for patients."

THE ONE THING that is unarguable is that the American Psychiatric Press, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of the APA, will make *Treatments of Psychiatric Disorders* available in time for the APA's annual meeting, this month, ensuring brisk sales. Should the APA be proud of itself? The book is almost certainly twenty-five years ahead of its time. Science has answered many questions about the roots of human thought and behavior; the pace at which further questions are being answered is breathtaking. But the quantity of what we do not know is more breathtaking still. It will be decades, at least, before doctors can minister to the mind as precisely as they now can to the rest of the body.

And yet scientists are always publishing interim reports on the current state of the art; they really have no choice. If chemists had to understand every last detail about atoms in absolute certainty before publishing results, there would be no chemical literature and little if any progress in chemistry. Similarly, if physicians had to understand perfectly the connections between behavior and heart disease before writing about them, then there would be no literature on the hazards of smoking or overeating. The drawback, of course, is error, but error can be corrected—indeed, errors are being corrected all the time in science texts.

In all likelihood, the new volume of treatment guidelines will not be the evil that many fear, nor will it rid mental-health care of all the quacks and bad practitioners. Its greatest effect will be to stimulate discussion about the treatment of human behavioral problems. In the long run, whether that treatment is an art, a science, or a bit of both, discussion is bound to improve patient care.

—Joseph Alper



RELIGION EASTERN ORTHODOXY

*An ancient and, to some, mysterious faith
is enjoying new vitality in America*

THE CELEBRATION last year of 1,000 years of Orthodox Christianity in Russia offered us a number of televised reports, many showing bearded priests wearing tall, odd-looking hats, moving gravely through incense-filled rituals. Ronald Reagan made a well-publicized visit to an Orthodox monastery in the Soviet Union, and his very appearance—freshly shaved, nattily attired in a business suit—seemed only to underscore the distance between "mainstream" Western Christianity and that of the Orthodox churches. To the extent that Americans have any awareness of Orthodoxy at all, it is seen as a foreign thing. Images of Rasputin and the Czar-

ina come to mind, or pictures of monks wandering around olive groves next to whitewashed churches in Greece. Most Americans became aware during last year's presidential campaign that Michael Dukakis's background is Greek Orthodox (as is that of Mikhail Gorbachev, whose mother is a practicing member of the Russian Orthodox Church). Orthodoxy often seems a badge of ethnicity, something alien and exotic.

However, there are indications that Orthodoxy has gained a new level of vitality and influence in America. The Eastern Orthodox Church is "the best-kept secret in America," according to Philip Saliba, who is the metropolitan, or archbishop, of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. The faith is as little known as it is partly because of ethnic division and lingering nationalism among its members. But seen as the one faith that it is—all the Orthodox churches are outposts of the same faith—Orthodoxy has more American members than the Episcopal Church, and, according to some statistics, nearly as many as all branches of Judaism combined. Orthodox approaches to prayer and worship are increasingly studied by members of other Christian denominations.

There are several signs that Orthodoxy may hold growing appeal as an alternative to Protestant and Catholic Christianity. Two groups, one formerly evangelical Protestant and one formerly practicing New Age religion, have recently converted to Orthodoxy. The ranks of the Orthodox clergy now include a large number of converts from other churches. And the Orthodox influence in the ecumenical movement is growing too: last year the National Council of Churches installed its first Orthodox president-elect.

The exact number of Orthodox worshippers in the United States is hard to determine, because the U.S. Bureau of the Census does not collect statistics on religious affiliation. This means that one must rely on statistics provided by the churches themselves. Their methods of statistical collection and the accuracy of their figures vary widely. The number of Orthodox in America has been estimated at as few as three million; the most widely accepted estimates—still guesses—place the number between four and five million.

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classic *The Way of a Pilgrim* has reached a diverse audience. The Prayer of the Heart, or the Jesus Prayer, plays an important role in J. D. Salinger's *Franny and Zooey*. This prayer—"Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me," generally repeated over and over—goes back to the early years of Eastern monasticism and has been a focus of Orthodox spirituality for centuries. Thomas Merton popularized Orthodox spirituality among Catholic and Protestant readers. The best introduction to Orthodoxy, *The Orthodox Church*, by Timothy Ware (Penguin), has sold steadily for years. Ware, a British convert to Orthodoxy from the Anglican Church, is now Bishop Kallistos, the first English bishop of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Brother Jeffrey Gros, a Roman Catholic and the director of the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches, suggests that because of its presence in the ecumenical movement, Orthodoxy has had an increasing influence on both Protestantism and Catholicism. To understand why, and also to understand the fragmentation of the Orthodox hierarchy in America, we need to look at the history of Orthodoxy and at the Orthodox perspective on Christian history, which reveals a view of Christianity significantly different from that held by most Western Christians.

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS consider theirs the church of the Apostles and believe that Western Christianity moved away from the right course, first with the rise of papal authority and later with the Reformation. Before the series of incidents that culminated in the split between the Eastern and Western churches, the Orthodox Church placed Rome first among the five ancient churches (the others were at Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem). The place of honor was given to Rome because Peter and Paul were martyred there and because the city was the original capital of the religious empire. In addition, Rome had a good reputation for doctrinal orthodoxy; unlike Alexandria and Antioch, it had not been, on the whole, a source of heresy (though one Roman pope, Honorius I, was declared heretical after his death). The argument that Jesus' words "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church" applied exclusively to the bishop of Rome, as Peter's successor, made less of an impression on the East than it did on the West. The rock in question was not

originally interpreted, by Eastern or Western theologians, as having anything to do with the papacy; it was usually understood to be Peter's confession of faith in Christ. Perhaps more to the point, Peter led the Church of Antioch as well as the Church of Rome; the Patriarch of Antioch was as much a successor to Peter as the Pope was.

Orthodox Christians believe that ecumenical councils are the ultimate touchstones of church authority. In the early Church, Paul was able to argue with Peter, and prevail, despite Peter's place as chief of the Apostles; the point was not Peter's authority but Paul's truth—his *orthodoxy*, a word that comes from Greek words meaning both "true glory" and "true belief." The original model for a church council is found in the Acts of the Apostles, where the Church was faced with questions that Jesus had not dealt with directly. One of these concerned gentile converts and Jewish law. The Council of Jerusalem argued the question, prayed, and announced its decision with the words "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us . . ." (Acts 15:28). The Orthodox emphasis is on conciliarity, or harmony of faith, rather than allegiance to a central authority.

It is Orthodox belief that the seven great ecumenical councils held from 325 to 787 outline the essential elements of Christianity. Icons (painted images of Christ, Mary, and the saints) were the subject of the seventh ecumenical council and are important in Orthodox worship and devotion. Icons had been denounced as un-Christian—ironically, this may have been partly a result of Islamic influence—and there were attempts by iconoclastic emperors to suppress them. The seventh ecumenical council argued that because an image of the unknowable God was made for us in Jesus, it was right for Christians to use images in the same way they used the words of Scripture and the liturgy, to show what could not have been known without God's revelation.

The fall of Rome isolated East and West from each other, as did the use of Latin in the West and Greek in the East. In the West, Rome's power became centralized, because Rome was the sole Western patriarchate and, after the barbarian invasions, the sole symbol of continuing authority. During the sixth century the West was still battling Arianism, which had died in the East. (Arians denied the divinity of Jesus.) In order to combat Arian influence, some Western

churches interpolated a phrase into the Creed of Nicaea and Constantinople, the central declaration of Christian faith. The Creed spoke of "the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father." The new rendering, at first rejected by the Pope, said that the Spirit "proceeds from the Father and the Son," words that emphasized Jesus' divinity. During a ninth-century dispute, Eastern theologians argued that individual churches had no right to change unilaterally a creed that had been agreed upon in a council of all the churches. Nonetheless, by the eleventh century the formula known as the *filioque* (Latin for "and the son") had become standard in the West.

Political and cultural factors, along with differences in church discipline, continued to separate the churches: the Western attempt to create a "Holy Roman Empire" under Charlemagne further estranged Rome from the Byzantine rulers in Constantinople. Until the ninth century East and West lived with their differences rather peaceably, for the most part. But in 867 an assertion of papal authority led to a formal split. Photius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, attacked the *filioque*, which was beginning to draw papal support, and summoned a council that excommunicated the Pope. The rift was healed swiftly when Photius was deposed, but the tensions continued. In 1054 a quarrel between the churches over papal authority and differing church practices led to the mutual excommunication of the Patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople. (These excommunications were set aside in 1965 by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople, though full communion between the churches has not in fact been restored.) In 1204 Western Crusaders sacked Constantinople, defiled its churches, and made the split between East and West complete.

Byzantium fell to the Turks in 1453, and the Church of Constantinople was effectively paralyzed by the region's Islamic conquerors. The Russian church emerged as the center of Orthodox scholarship and missionary activity; some triumphant theologians in Russia referred to Moscow as "the third Rome," the new heir to the imperial heritage.

RUSSIAN MISSIONARIES brought Orthodoxy to Alaska in 1794. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, immigration brought Orthodox Christians from a number of nations to

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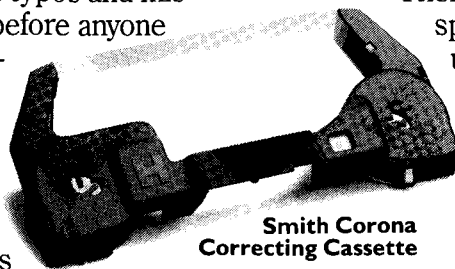
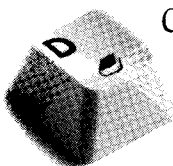
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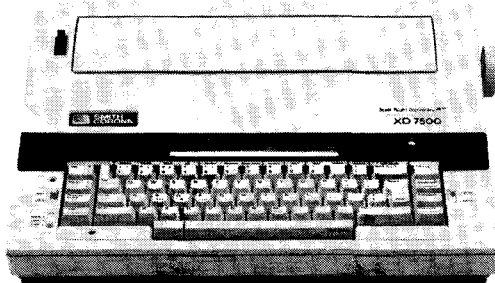
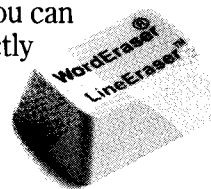
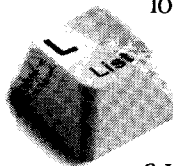
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the United States proper, and the Church found itself faced with a problem that persists to this day.

Orthodox canon law calls for "one bishop in one city"—but suddenly parishes and jurisdictions were centered on the ethnic backgrounds of their members. Greek bishops were dispatched from the mother country to minister to Greek congregations; Russian bishops were sent for Russians; Romanians for Romanians, and so forth. A Russian-sponsored attempt to unify the Orthodox in America fell apart early in this century, owing to the Russian Revolution. Anti-Communist fervor in the fifties further divided the Slavic churches, for some church members believed that one could not in good faith give loyalty to a bishop whose position depended on obedience to an atheistic government.

The 1988 *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* lists separate headquarters for the Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America, the Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America, the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, and three groups with their origins in Russian Orthodoxy—the Orthodox Church in America, the Russian Orthodox Church in the U.S.A., and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. All these churches (and more) are united doctrinally, and share the sacraments (officially there are seven, as in Roman Catholicism, though many Orthodox theologians would prefer not to place a numerical limit on the means of sacramental action). Married men may be ordained, but no priest may marry after ordination. Bishops are chosen from the celibate clergy.

Non-Orthodox are confronted with an apparent paradox: a church that is united dogmatically and spiritually at the grass-roots level, perhaps more so than any other, and that is at the same time seemingly close to anarchic at the top. This fragmentation has hampered Orthodox attempts at evangelization. Because most Orthodox live in countries dominated by communism or Islam, the Church in recent years has done little proselytizing. True, there are Orthodox missions in Africa. There is a Japanese Orthodox Church. The Russian missionary presence in Alaska led to the conversion of the Aleut tribe, which is, with few exceptions, Orthodox, and to the conversion of many Yupik Eskimo

and Tlingit. Nevertheless, the general pattern of Orthodoxy in America has been passive, and most converts have learned of Orthodoxy on their own.

Father Leonid Kishkovsky, the ecumenical officer of the Orthodox Church in America, became the first Orthodox president-elect of the National Council of Churches in January of 1988. In the United States, he says, Orthodoxy has for the first time encountered a technologically advanced, pluralistic, secular culture. "In most traditional Orthodox countries—Lebanon is a tragic exception here—Orthodox are not as challenged to meet the needs of a changing world. Even our ethnic pluralism is forcing us to deal with the fact that the Orthodox faith is not tribal or ethnic. It has baptized and transformed cultures, but it is not tribal."

That fact may be reflected in the number of converts who serve in the Orthodox clergy. Seven of the twelve bishops of the Orthodox Church in America are converts from non-Orthodox backgrounds, including the Episcopal, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Baptist churches. For the past several years some forty percent of the approximately one hundred students enrolled at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, in Crestwood, New York, have been converts. Ten years ago the Byzantine-rite Roman Catholic monastery of New Skete, in Cambridge, New York, became a monastery of the Orthodox Church in America.

THE TWO GROUPS that recently entered the Orthodox fold in the United States are the Antiochian Evangelical Orthodox Mission, which has its origins in the Campus Crusade for Christ, and the Christ the Savior Brotherhood, formerly the Holy Order of MANS (according to the Brotherhood's director, Father Andrew Rossi, the acronym is taken from Greek words describing the Order's mission). The Campus Crusade for Christ was a Protestant evangelical sect that flourished in the sixties. The Holy Order of MANS was in most respects New Age, having focused early in its history on "the Aquarian Age," special breathing techniques, and a rejection of dogmatic religion; for a while it included Jesus among "the great avatars." The two groups met each other on the way into Orthodoxy.

Father Peter Gillquist, now the president of the coordinating council of the 2,400-member Antiochian Evangelical

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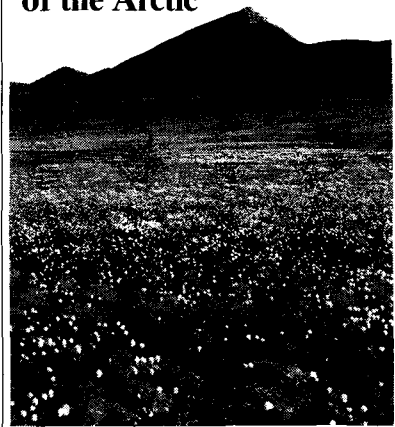


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Orthodox Mission, was a staff member of the Campus Crusade for Christ before coming to believe that evangelism was properly a task of the church, not of self-appointed individuals, and leaving the organization in 1968. He and several other Campus Crusade veterans began to study the early Church. They read Ignatius of Antioch and other early Christian writers, and came to believe that eucharistic liturgy, governance by bishops, and a common sacramental life were all present in Christianity from the beginning and were not later accretions, as some evangelicals argue. A study of patristics, or the teachings of the Eastern and Western church fathers, which were important to the early articulation of Christian theology, led them to Orthodoxy. Eventually they, together with a growing band of followers, began to call themselves the Evangelical Orthodox Church, and sought formal contact with the Orthodox churches in America.

"By January of 1985 we felt we were ready to go in, theologically and liturgically," Gillquist says. The Evangelical Orthodox Church had some initially disappointing contacts with Orthodox churches, but in 1987 the Antiochian Orthodox Church received seventeen Evangelical Orthodox congregations into the faith, after serious conversation with the groups' leaders. (The Antiochian Orthodox Church had already shown itself hospitable to a few Episcopal parishes whose members had wished to become part of Orthodoxy. These "Western Rite" Orthodox have been allowed to retain the classic Book of Common Prayer liturgy, altered in a few places to conform to Orthodox teachings.)

In a documentary produced by the Antiochian Orthodox Church about the reception of the Evangelical Orthodox, Father Gordon Walker, of the Antiochian Evangelical Orthodox Mission, says, "We did not set out to discover Orthodoxy. We set out to find out what the ancient Church was really like, and in doing so we discovered Orthodoxy." The group is now an official ministry of the Antiochian Orthodox Church. It publishes *Again*, a magazine whose tone, in its graphics and articles, is evangelical. In an interview published in the evangelical Protestant magazine *Christianity Today*, Metropolitan Philip Saliba said, "I think the main task of the Evangelical Orthodox Mission is to preach the Gospel to America. I don't want them to lose their identity as an evan-

gelical missionary group. I feel strongly that our best gift to America will be a stable Christianity that is rooted in the Bible, holy tradition, and the fathers of the Church."

The Christ the Savior Brotherhood has about a thousand members, three hundred of whom live communally. The group has moved toward Orthodoxy over a twenty-year period. Its founder, Earl Blighton, was initially attracted to Rosicrucianism, theosophy, and occult thinking. An early pamphlet speaks of "God-realized beings" and says that members of the order live "by the ideals of the teachings of the Master Jesus, and of the New Age." Dogmatic religion was withering away, according to Blighton.

Following Blighton's death, in 1974, it became apparent that the order was being pulled in two directions: toward Christianity and toward New Age religion. Members of the order began a serious study of Christianity. "Too much talk about Jesus' teachings, separated from his person, led away from Christianity altogether," says Father Andrew Rossi. "When you started to talk about Jesus as a person, and about a personal relationship, you got closer. So we started to study the idea of discipleship. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book *The Cost of Discipleship* cut like lightning across the order."

From Bonhoeffer they turned to C. S. Lewis, whose insistence on the need for basic Christian doctrine challenged the order's anti-dogmatic assumptions. "Lewis showed us how much we were still part of the *Zeitgeist*, the mass mind," Rossi says. "Then we came upon Merton." The late Trappist monk's *Contemplation in a World of Action* led the order to the classical theology of the West, which led it to the fathers of the Church and, ultimately, to Orthodoxy. Last year the order was received into Orthodoxy by Metropolitan Pangratos, whose church is located in Queens. "He was willing to receive us as a group," Rossi says. Rossi acknowledges that a fellowship of men and women dedicated to common work and communal living is unusual in Orthodoxy, but he hopes that the communal life of the Brotherhood will provide a model. "Our goal," Rossi says, "is to re-establish a microcosm of Christian culture wherever we can. We are opposed to the spirit of the age."

The Brotherhood administers Raphael House, in San Francisco, a shelter for homeless families; it is assisted by members of the Antiochian Evangelical

Orthodox Mission. Other such communities, in Boston, Indianapolis, Atlanta, and Portland, Oregon, lead a shared life of liturgy, prayer, and service (and in Indianapolis and Portland operate branches of Raphael House). The group publishes two journals, *Epiphany* and *Tree of Life*, which try to bring an Orthodox perspective to such concerns as the environment, family life, and marriage. The tone is biblical, socially compassionate, morally conservative, and decidedly traditional.

WHAT IS THE appeal of Orthodoxy to these and other converts? There have been a few conversions for negative reasons—Episcopalians upset over the ordination of women, Catholics who are dissatisfied with the post-Vatican II liturgy. For the most part, however, new members of the Church are more positive. They speak of an unbroken continuity with the Church of the Apostles (Orthodoxy never went through upheavals like the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation), the sense of awe and mystery they derive from the eucharistic liturgy, and their feeling that for

the first time they are participating in a living spiritual tradition. Some are attracted by the Orthodox teachings about the fall of man and original sin.

Most Orthodox theologians reject Augustine's idea that Adam's guilt is inherited by all human beings, a belief shared by Catholics and Protestants. While accepting the belief that the world is fallen, Orthodox theologians say that humanity inherits the conditions brought about by sin, not personal guilt. They emphasize the freedom that we have to cooperate with, or resist, the will of God, and see redemption as a transformation and ultimate liberation, the complete restoration of the image of God in human beings. This sharing of the divine life—*theosis*, or deification—is a central theme of Orthodox spirituality.

Just as some people outside Orthodoxy have been drawn in, so others have drawn something from Orthodoxy to renew their own Christian faith. Brother Jeffrey Gros, of the National Council of Churches, speaks of the strong Orthodox influence on a recent World Council of Churches statement on baptism, eucharist, and ministry. Also, Brother Gros

says, "Protestants have learned from Orthodoxy's greater ethnic diversity, and its longer theological and social experience. Catholics have learned to look beyond a medieval to a patristic synthesis."

Anthony Ugolnik is the author of *The Illuminating Icon*, a study of the modern Russian religious mind. An Orthodox deacon who teaches English literature at Franklin and Marshall College, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Ugolnik is active in ecumenical affairs. Asked what he thinks the influence of Orthodoxy in America will be over the long haul, he presents the influence of Orthodoxy among Native Americans in Alaska as a prototype. "Orthodoxy was finally not Russian for them; it has become an expression of their own native culture, and a model of resistance against assimilation and oppression. This is also true of the Ugandan and Kenyan missions. Our ritual forms, our respect for culture, our usual willingness to absorb native promise and traditions and sanctify them with hallowed space—this is the greatest contribution we can make to the American religious scene."

—John Garvey

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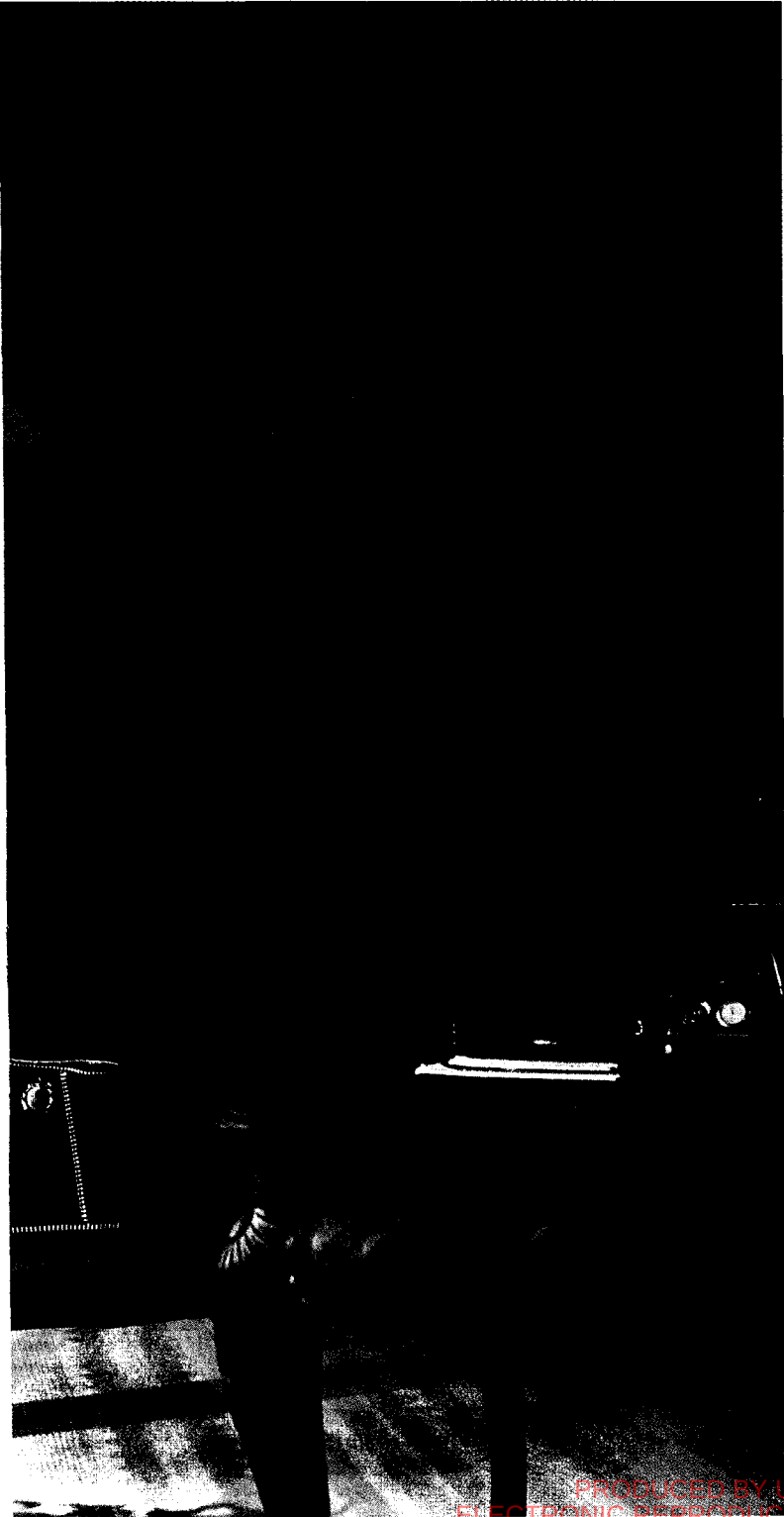
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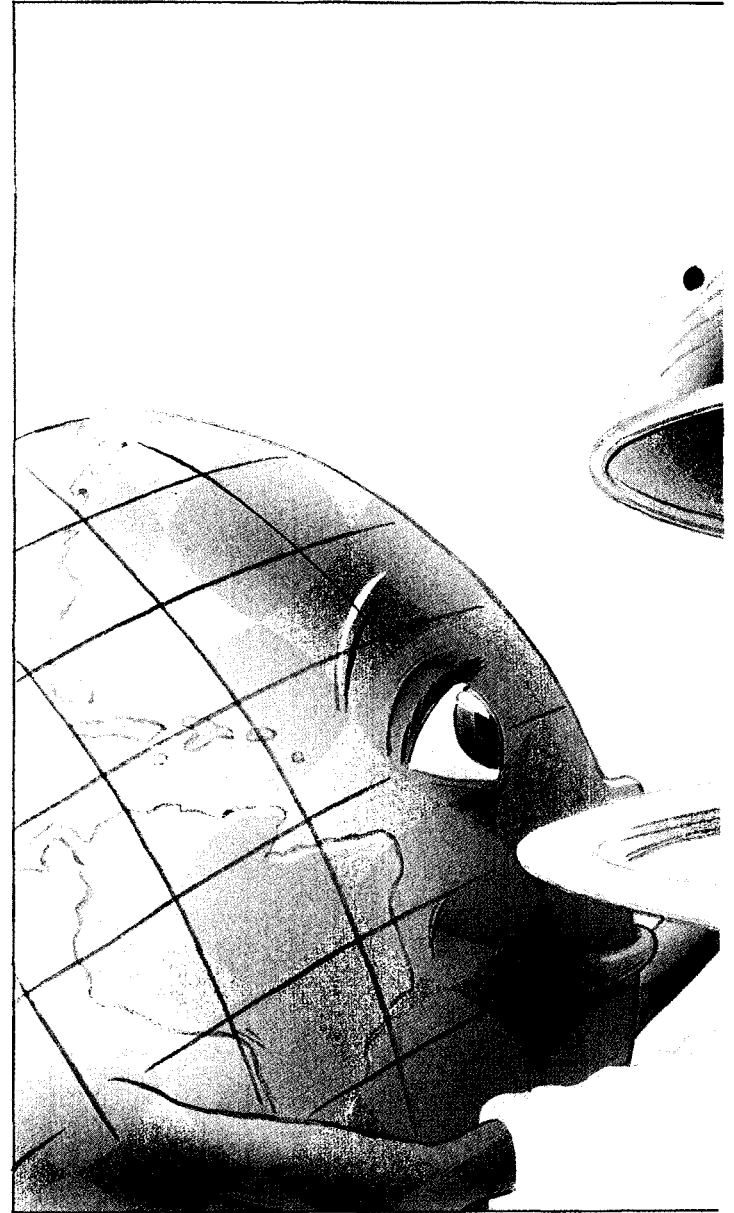
CONTAINING JAPAN

BY JAMES FALLOWS

FINALLY I UNDERSTAND HOW A DIPLOMAT FEELS when he lies. A diplomat learns to suppress his shame about small deceptions, if they serve a larger goal. In Saudi Arabia, I once heard a visiting American dignitary tell Saudi princes about the “deep similarities” between his nation and theirs. I maliciously hoped that someone would ask him for examples (big deserts, perhaps?) but I recognized the motive behind his fib. If he’d been gratuitously honest—“our societies have nothing in common”—he would have made no one any happier and would only have undermined his real purpose: securing a supply of oil.

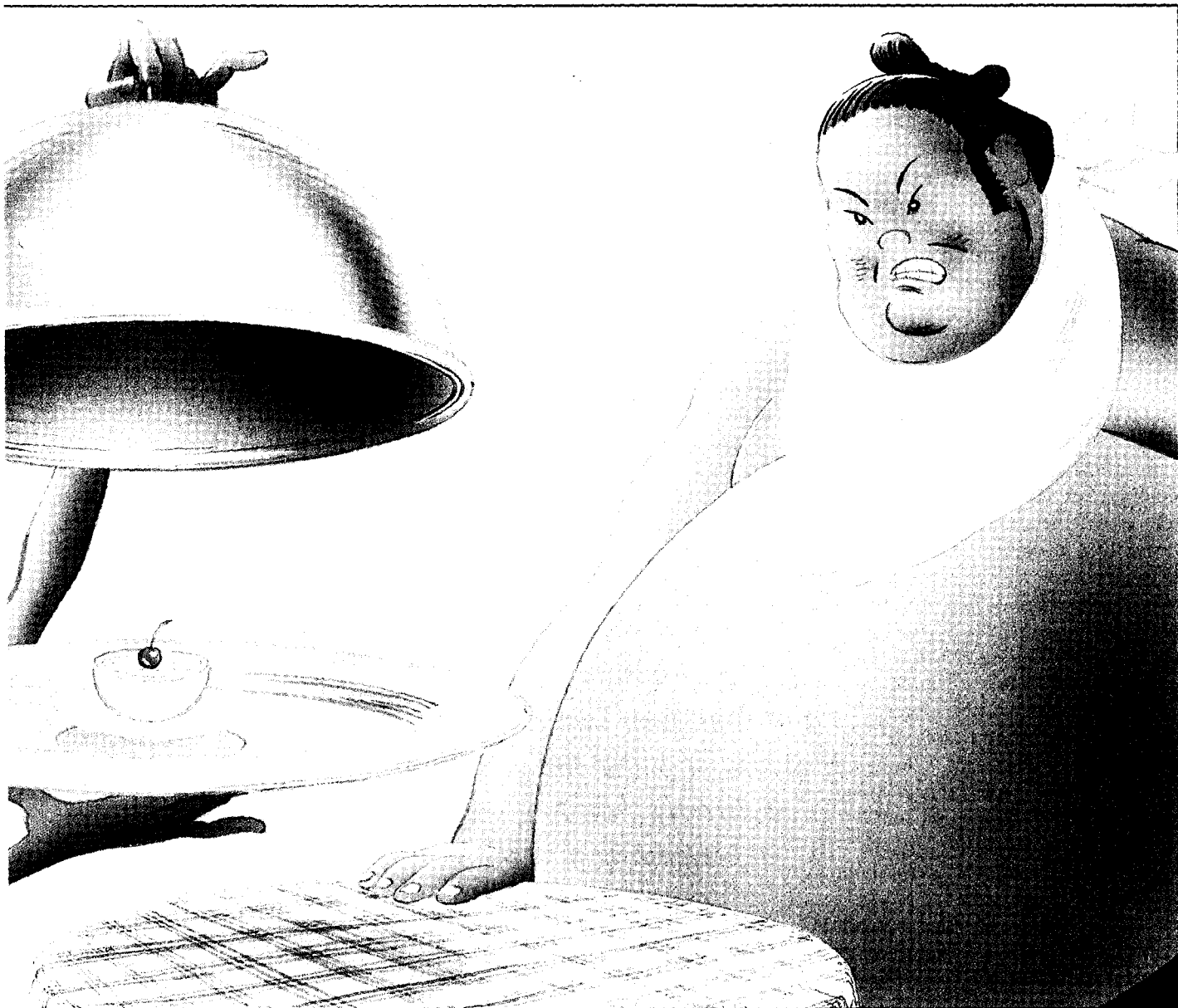
There is a similar but more powerful temptation toward tactical dishonesty about Japan, a temptation that reporters as well as diplomats feel. Japan is more important to the United States, in more ways, than Saudi Arabia or most other countries will ever be. Yet Japanese-American relationships have a fragile, walking-on-eggs quality, which makes people think that it’s dangerous to talk frankly in public. Many other international relationships are robust enough to survive open discussions of disagreements; during the nasty little “beef hormone” war early this year, for example, no one imagined that the United States and the European Community were about to turn their backs on each other. But the American fraternity of Japan-handlers, which includes most diplomats and a number of businessmen, scholars, and journalists, instinctively stifles outright complaints about Japan.

The impulse toward tact is understandable. Most Americans who have worked in Japan are aware of raw anti-Japanese prejudice in the United States and don’t want to pander to it. They are also reluctant to do anything that would aggravate Japan’s ever-present fears that the rest of the world is about to gang up on it and exclude it. The last time Japan felt left out was in the 1930s, when it started down the road to fascist nationalism after it suffered a number of international snubs. These started with the British Commonwealth’s opposition to an anti-racism



resolution at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, which the Japanese saw as a rejection of their racial equality with the white West. In 1941 the Japanese Imperial Navy went ahead with the attack on Pearl Harbor despite a widespread belief among naval strategists that the war would be a catastrophe for Japan. The country’s military leadership was convinced (and Japanese students are now taught) that the West had decided to choke Japan to death, with boycotts, so Japan might as well strike. Japan is not likely to lash out again through military aggression. But people aware of its history and sensitivities think twice before saying anything that would make Japan feel cornered.

Now, however, Japan has become too important to be treated with such delicacy. Excessive politeness prevents Japan and the United States from facing the conflict that in the long run endangers their relations much more than the comments of any bigoted Japan-bashers could.



For the foreseeable future Japan will be America's single most valuable partner, because of what it can do in three areas. First is the U.S.-Japan military understanding, which prevents Japan from building as large an army as it would need on its own, leaves the United States as the reigning power in the Pacific, adds very little direct cost to the U.S. military budget, and prevents an arms race throughout Asia in which all other countries would try to defend themselves against the Japanese. Second is finance: Japan has become America's financier, providing investment capital and covering much of the U.S. government's debt. Third is business: Japanese-American business relations provide technology, markets, talent, supplies, and other essential elements to both nations' companies.

These three realities tempt many people, especially American diplomats, to assume a fourth: that Japanese and American interests do not clash in any fundamental way.

This assumption is wrong. There is a basic conflict between Japanese and American interests—notwithstanding that the two countries need each other as friends—and it would be better to face it directly than to pretend that it doesn't exist.

That conflict arises from Japan's inability or unwillingness to restrain the one-sided and destructive expansion of its economic power. The expansion is one-sided because Japanese business does to other countries what Japan will not permit to be done to itself. It is destructive because it will lead to exactly the international ostracism that Japan most fears, because it will wreck the postwar system of free trade that has made Japan and many other nations prosperous, and because it will ultimately make the U.S.-Japanese partnership impossible to sustain.

The Japanese do not desire any of these results, or the erosion of American power that would go along with them. Despite their pride, veering toward arrogance, about what

Japanese business has achieved, most Japanese would feel more comfortable with a United States that is strong, stable, and rich enough to remain the No. 1 of the non-communist world. (Much more frequently than Americans, Japanese talk about nations holding No. 1 and No. 2 positions.) Japan's twentieth-century history in Asia implies that it will be much better accepted as an economic power and cultural force than as a major military power. As a diplomatic leader, Japan is still reluctant and inexperienced. It has given the world an example of what hard work can do, but in general Japan prefers to focus on its own affairs and let other countries proselytize for democracy, capitalism, communism, or whatever else they believe in. Most Japanese politicians say that they would like to leave non-economic initiatives to the United States—if the United States can afford them. Unfortunately, the major external threat to America's ability to pay the costs of leadership is Japan's uncontrolled, unbalanced economic growth. To keep a world trade system going, the strongest powers must be willing to make certain sacrifices—for example, keeping their own markets open, despite domestic political objections, as the British did during their free-trade heyday and as the United States has on the whole done since the end of the Second World War. (Japanese and Korean politicians now complain about American "protectionism," but how protectionist can a country with a \$10 billion monthly trade deficit really be?) Japan shows very little inclination to make these sacrifices itself, and its continued expansion will in time weaken the ability of the United States to do so.

Friends must sometimes help friends break destructive habits. Japan is in a good position to lecture the United States about its destructive business and financial habits, and more and more Japanese officials have been doing just that. But Japan's destructive habits are potentially more harmful to the rest of the world than America's are. If Japan cannot restrain the excesses of its own economy, then the United States, to save its partnership with Japan, should impose limits from outside.

Unequal Competition

IS JAPAN'S ECONOMIC GROWTH REALLY UNBALANCED? One indication of imbalance is so obvious that it seems almost tasteless to bring it up. This is the gap between Japan's export success and its artificially suppressed consumption at home. The same country that has the biggest cash surpluses and the largest overseas investments in the world also has by far the highest consumer prices, the highest proportion of unpaved roads among developed

countries, the lowest per capita endowment of parks, sporting areas, and other public facilities, and across the board the least materially bountiful life.

A recent international survey found that the residents of Tokyo, the richest metropolis of what is theoretically the richest country in the world, stand only twenty-eighth highest in purchasing power per capita among fifty-two major cities, way ahead of people in Cairo and Lagos (two of the poorest) but way behind those in Los Angeles, Zurich, and Frankfurt (first through third, respectively). Some of Japan's underconsumption reflects an unavoidable lag in putting its recent wealth to work—it will take decades to improve Japan's roads and houses—but most is caused by the economy's continuing bias toward corporate profit and foreign investment rather than individual consumer welfare.

The Dutch journalist Karel van Wolferen asks in the opening pages of his forceful and important new book *The Enigma of Japanese Power*, "For what ultimate purpose do [the Japanese] deprive themselves of comfort and risk the enmity of the world?" His answer is that individual Japanese, rather than depriving themselves, are deprived by the country's major power centers—the big corporations, the government regulators—which are always struggling to keep from losing ground to one another or to foreign competitors. I'll refer several times to his book, which has just been published in the United States, because, like *MITI and the Japanese Miracle*, by

Chalmers Johnson, of the University of California, it is a seminal study of the structural and institutional reasons for Japan's growth. ("MITI" stands for the legendary Ministry of International Trade and Industry, or Tsusansho.)

A second, equally obvious indication of imbalance involves trade statistics. Japan's trade is somewhat more balanced than it used to be. When the yen began to rise in value against the dollar, in 1985, the trade surplus began to shrink. As a proportion of Japan's gross national product, for instance, the surplus fell by almost half in three years, from about 4.5 percent in 1985 to about 2.4 percent last summer. Last year Japan's overall trade surplus fell by some 2.5 percent, from \$80 billion in 1987 to \$78 billion in 1988, and its surplus with the United States fell also, from about \$52 billion to \$48 billion. A big surge in foreign tourism recycled some of Japan's export earnings last year.

But these adjustments stopped happening about a year ago. By every available measure—dollars, yen, physical volume, or percentage of Japanese GNP—Japan's exports and its trade surplus increased from the middle of 1988



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through the first few months of this year. Measured in dollars, Japan's worldwide trade surplus reached its highest-ever level last December. (The dollar measure is significant, because most international trade is conducted in dollars, and dollars, of course, are used for investment in the United States. Also, the yen-dollar rate has been fairly stable since early 1988. This removes the distortion caused by the plummeting dollar in 1986 and 1987, when Japan's trade surplus decreased in yen terms while rising in dollar terms.) In 1985, when the dollar was worth 250 yen, the American trade deficit with Japan was about a billion dollars a week. In 1989, with the dollar worth 125 to 135 yen, the trade deficit is a billion dollars a week. That is, for products worth half as much in yen, Japan receives the same flow of dollars, which it can use to obtain as much as a billion dollars' worth of U.S. assets each week.

More important, the underlying trends point to larger surpluses in the future. Japan's most rapidly growing exports are the highest-tech and highest-value ones, where its research is most advanced and where in many cases—fax machines are an example—there are few or no non-Japanese competitors. Japanese industrialists often talk about the “phenomenal adjustments” they’ve made since 1986, but in most cases they’re talking about cost-cutting and other maneuvers that have allowed them to keep up their exports despite the strong yen.

The remarkable thing about the surpluses, of course, is not that they stopped growing for a while but that they persist at all. “If the United States were a well-run country, neoclassical economists would be hanging from the Capitol dome,” Chalmers Johnson told me early this year. “They predicted that by the time the dollar got [down] to 190 yen, the trade deficit would have disappeared.” The dollar crashed through the 190 level more than three years ago, and has spent most of the past year in the 120s, and still Japan has the largest trade surpluses in the world. Johnson may sound intemperate, but his point is fair. Classic free-trade analysis has proved virtually useless in predicting how Japan's trade balances would respond to a rising yen. Although Japanese officials typically put less faith in free-market equilibrium than Americans do, they also were often surprised by the effects of *endaka* (“high yen”). Many Japanese officials I interviewed early in 1986 moaned and wrung their hands about the devastation that *endaka* was sure to wreak among Japanese producers. In 1987 the *Sankei Shimbun*, a perfectly respectable paper, published a column that likened the yen's rise to the U.S. military's Pacific campaign during the Second World War.

In a few months the yen soared from 245 to 200. This was the equivalent of Japan's loss of four aircraft carriers at Midway. . . . Washington's final objective is probably an exchange rate of ¥100 to \$1. That represents Japan's total defeat and Gen. Douglas MacArthur's triumphant entry into Tokyo. . . . We must not lose the Pacific War twice.

Why didn't it turn out that way? Some of the peculiar buoyancy of Japan's trade surplus reflects another unexpected consequence of *endaka*. Since Japan imports nearly

all its oil, its economy was more disrupted than America's after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini came to power in Iran and engineered the second “oil shock.” As prices soared, Japan had to spend more than five percent of its gross national product on imported oil. Since then the price of oil in dollars has collapsed, and so has the price of dollars in yen. As a result, oil now costs Japan less than one percent of its GNP, an enormous windfall that has increased Japan's overall trade surplus—and will curtail it if the price of oil shoots up again. Astute business strategies also played a crucial role. Fearful of competition from Korea and Taiwan, whose currencies were slower to rise against the dollar, Japanese companies cut costs and held down their retail prices in the United States. At the same time, they held their prices up in Japan, despite savings on imported supplies, which in effect meant penalizing the Japanese consumer to preserve market share overseas. (This is a very familiar pattern and is the main explanation for the “47th Street Photo paradox”: that Japanese-made products are always cheaper in New York than in Tokyo. If Japan's markets really were open to new contenders and to price competition, 47th Street Photo itself could make a fortune by shipping Japanese cameras and audio systems back to Tokyo and selling them there.) During the mid-1980s Japanese exporters built huge war chests of cash—Toyota Motors, for instance, now has more than \$12 billion in cash in the bank, and no corporate debt. This gave them the money to buy new production equipment, cut costs further, and wait out the effects of *endaka*. Meanwhile, foreign firms were slow to penetrate the Japanese market, and even the ones that acted quickly were often thwarted by the inefficiencies and cartel arrangements of the Japanese retail system.

Economists can and undoubtedly will keep weighing the various factors that prevented *endaka* from eliminating Japan's trade surplus, but the theoretical explanations are not as important as the practical consequences: the surplus didn't shrink very much, Japanese exports are now rapidly rising, imports aren't increasing fast enough to offset them, and for now it looks as if *endaka*'s effect on the trade surplus is about over. The effect of the yen's rise against the dollar was almost identical to what happened when the yen rose against European currencies early in the 1980s. Then as now, Japanese industries modernized, held down prices, resisted imports—and soon were increasing their trade surplus despite a stronger currency. The same Japanese firms that were bemoaning the perils of the 180-yen dollar are now well equipped to survive with the dollar worth 100 yen or even less. “The change in currency rates was essentially a one-time shift in prices,” says Kenneth Courtis, of Deutsche Bank in Tokyo. “By increasing their volume and adding to their efficiency, Japanese firms have by now *completely* offset the dollar's devaluation. It's as if nothing changed, except that Japan's assets are now worth twice as much.” Moreover, as Courtis and others point out, Japanese industries have changed strategically, toward manufacturing much more valuable products. All the

underlying trends in the economy indicate another export surge: manufacturing productivity is up, the personal savings rate is up, corporate profit and investment are both up, value added per unit of export is up. Despite month-by-month fluctuations, the Japanese surplus should, on the evidence now available, keep moving up too.

The supercomputer industry is one poignant indication of the long-term trends. One relatively small American company (Cray Research) and one medium-sized (Control Data) are competing for market share against three of Japan's major corporations: Fujitsu, Hitachi, and NEC. Cray, especially, has the lead in software and other performance points, but the Japanese manufacturers feel confident that the sheer difference in financing and integrated manufacturing ability will ultimately grind down the smaller American firms. "We have our own chip divisions," an NEC spokesman told David Sanger, of *The New York Times*. "[We] can custom-make the high speed chips we need. Cray can't." Cray buys from a chip-making division of Fujitsu, one of its direct competitors.

To be clear about it: Much of what has happened since 1985 is to Japan's technical and even moral credit. Its industries adapted where others were slow to do so. Some of the continuing imbalance reflects less worthy factors, notably the clogged-up nature of Japan's domestic economy. What really matters is not the blame but the result: almost four years after the radical corrective step of *endaka*, Japan's trade is becoming more imbalanced, not less.

There is one further indication of economic imbalance: the continuing pattern of one-sidedness in many Japanese transactions. A few years ago the management expert Peter Drucker introduced the term "adversarial trade" to describe Japan's approach to commerce, which is characterized by resistance to high-value imports and by targeted attacks on established foreign industries. The contrast with Germany is instructive. Like Japan, Germany chronically runs a large trade surplus; exports actually represent a higher proportion of its GNP. The reason there are fewer complaints about Germany, however, is not simply that it imports much more than Japan (20 percent of its GNP, versus Japan's six percent) but also that it imports more valuable things. Three fourths of the goods that Germans (and Americans and most Western Europeans) import are manufactured products; less than half of Japan's imports are. Germany's trading patterns are similar to those of most other developed countries—Germany is simply more successful at carrying them out. Japan's are the exception. Japan is now starting to import more manufactured goods, but from a very low base.

Even some of Japan's "market-opening" measures end up illustrating its adversarial tendencies. Last year Japan agreed to reduce its barriers against beef imports, in stages over the next few years. One immediate effect was to increase the sales not of U.S. beef in Japan but of U.S. beef ranches. (There is already significant Japanese investment in the Australian beef industry.) "The whole point in

opening up the Japanese market was for American producers to be able to sell here," Billy Cody, of Oregon's Japan Representative Office, told Fred Hiatt, of *The Washington Post*. "So what is the mentality that refuses to buy our products? What is the necessity to come and buy our producers?" Japan has also theoretically liberalized its wine market, although you would not know it from the prices or selection at the liquor store. But at a seminar for wine producers held last year in Washington state, an export adviser told the vintners to face the fact that they would be selling grapes to Japan, not finished wine. At what economists call the micro level, the Japanese preference for buying raw materials (grapes) or entire businesses (the cattle ranches) may be perfectly rational. No one is forcing American ranchers to sell out to the Japanese, just as no one forced the U.S. government to borrow so much money from overseas. But at the macro level the Japanese preferences reinforce the impression of adversarial trade.

Taken together, these developments reveal the tension between free-trade theory and Japan's place in the world. Most economic forces are supposed to be self-correcting—if the price goes up enough, the demand goes down. In the case of Japan's trade balance, there was a powerful external shove toward correction, in the form of *endaka*. Yet on the evidence of what has happened since 1985, normal economic and business pressures are not going to balance Japan's trade accounts. Its surpluses, assets, and industrial strengths will continue to grow in a lopsided way.

Money Politics

IF NORMAL MARKET FORCES WON'T MODERATE JAPAN'S expansion, what about outright political control? For more than five years Japanese leaders have said, with seeming sincerity, that they want to reduce their nation's trade surplus sharply, since it is the source of 90 percent of the ill will that Japan encounters in the world. So far their efforts have made little or no difference, because the basic elements of Japanese politics—the flow of money, the balance of power, and the underlying structure of ideas—all push the economy ahead on its unbalanced course.

A historical comparison illustrates how little the Japanese have done to redirect their economy. The last time one nation had such an unbalanced position in world trade was the late 1940s, when the U.S. economy represented half the economic activity in the entire war-battered world. With its own industries newly expanded during the war, and everyone else's blown up, the United States could have completely swamped all competitors in an outright production contest. Instead, the United States rapidly and deliberately opened its markets to imports, and through the Marshall Plan it helped rebuild foreign factories so that they could produce something for Americans to buy. In 1947 the U.S. trade surplus represented 4.5 percent of GNP (comparable to Japan's surplus in 1985). By 1950 it had been driven down to 0.5 percent. At the time, that was regarded as a great accomplishment—and it was, be-

cause the opened American market gave Europeans, Asians, and other producers a place to sell their goods.

Those were extraordinary times, when the U.S. government felt it had to, and could, act boldly to rebuild the world. Still, the change occurred within three years—exactly as much time as has passed since Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone's government released the Maekawa report and indicated that it represented a step almost as dramatic as the Marshall Plan. The report outlined a radical reorientation of Japan's economic structure. No longer would salarymen be admired for toiling eighteen hours a day in order to expand Japan's market share. No longer would Japan's standard of living be so far out of whack with its paper wealth, and no longer would Japan view its trade surplus as an indication of its superiority over the West. Japan would take its place as a normal capitalist nation—producing but also consuming, making some advanced products but leaving others to competitors, no longer scrambling desperately to “catch up” with the West, which it had in many ways surpassed.

The Maekawa report was formally unveiled about a week after I arrived in Japan for the first time. I went to the jammed press conference at which its recommendations were explained, and there I was impressed by the clear logic and apparent earnestness of Haruo Maekawa, the former Bank of Japan governor who supervised the study. When the Western reporters started asking their questions, I was surprised and slightly embarrassed by their cynical, barely respectful tone. “We’ve heard this so many times before,” one German reporter said. “Why should we believe it now?” An Englishman said, in arch upper-class tones, “Could you tell us, please, quite specifically, what industry are you going to expose to the market? And how many years from now will this be?” Was this any way to build good will?

Now, of course, I understand. Three years have gone by, the same period it took for the postwar United States to transform a huge trade surplus into practically none, and the vaunted Maekawa report has had a very modest effect. There have been a few symbolic changes—banks and some government offices are closed on Saturday mornings—but compared with the claims made when it was presented, the report has been a major disappointment. Considering that Maekawa himself seems to have put his heart into his program, the meager results illustrate how heavily the odds are stacked against the small tribe of Japanese “internationalists” who would sincerely like to open the economy to real competition. To Americans, MITI may still appear to be something like Trade Surplus Central, plotting round the clock to keep foreign products off Japa-

nese shelves. MITI had roughly that role for several decades after the war, and some parts of it still operate in the same way, yet MITI as a whole has become a home for such free-trade sentiment as can be found anywhere in the Japanese bureaucracy. But as a whole the Japanese government's effect is as restrictive as ever, because of the growing importance of special-interest politics.

UNDER KAKUEI TANAKA, JAPAN'S PRIME MINISTER in the early 1970s, special-interest money became even more important than it had been before. Unlike most modern Japanese politicians, Tanaka was a self-made man, a cunning, earthy figure not unlike Lyndon Johnson. He was the central character in Japanese politics for almost a generation; even after he left office in disgrace because of his involvement in the Lockheed bribery case, he exercised behind-the-scenes power, and continued to do so for a while after a disabling stroke. (He is still alive but has had no public role for several years.)

Tanaka's most significant contribution was to put together a system of money politics which ultimately led to today's long-running and highly confusing Recruit Cosmos scandal and—more important—is probably the major reason the Japanese economy is so hard to bring into balance. The Japanese government had coordinated investment and export plans in the 1950s and 1960s, but in the Tanaka era the arm of the government responsible became less a high-

minded national-development agency and more a straightforward source of pork-barrel cash. By now it has evolved into something similar to the iron-triangle and military-industrial-complex pattern found in the United States. These are informal alliances of government bureaucracies and private companies, held together by the desire to ensure the continuing flow of public funds. In Japan the alliances are often known as *zoku*, or “tribes,” and they include the politicians who support budget increases for their favorite agencies.

The influence of the *zoku* is tremendous. The Japanese government consists essentially of nothing but competing *zoku*, who fight among each other (and against the Ministry of Finance, which tries to rein in their spending) to advance their own interests. The construction *zoku*, the most lucrative, protects the industry against foreign competition and divides up public money among participants through a system of *dango*, or pre-bidding conferences at which “competitors” decide how they will apportion the available work. The Ministry of Agriculture does its best to protect farmers and fishermen against imports. Even the

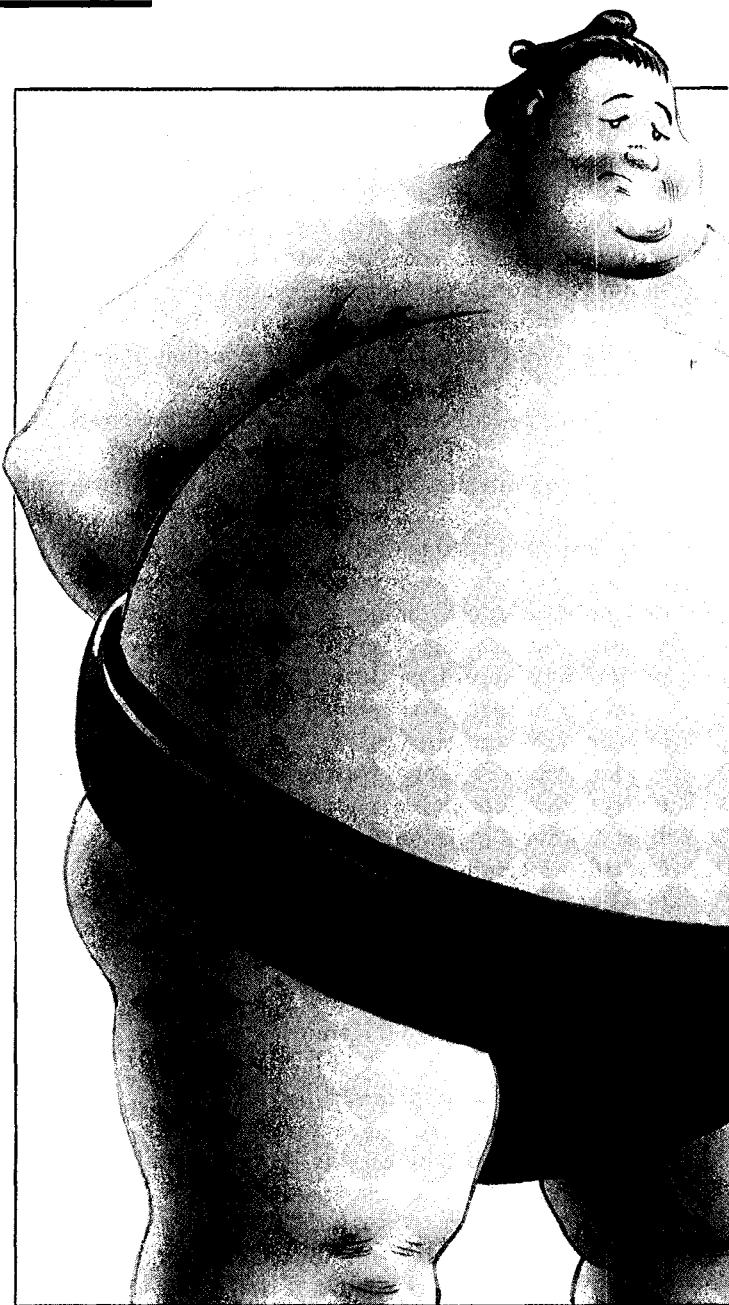


*By continuing to
launch new industrial
assaults in America and all over
the world Japan suggests that
it does not accept the basic
reciprocal logic of
free trade.*

fact that Japan is about to surpass the United States as the world's leading donor of foreign aid has its *zoku* aspect. Compared with aid from the United States or Europe, a high proportion of Japanese aid is formally or informally "tied," so it comes back as purchase orders for Japanese equipment or contracts for Japanese construction firms.

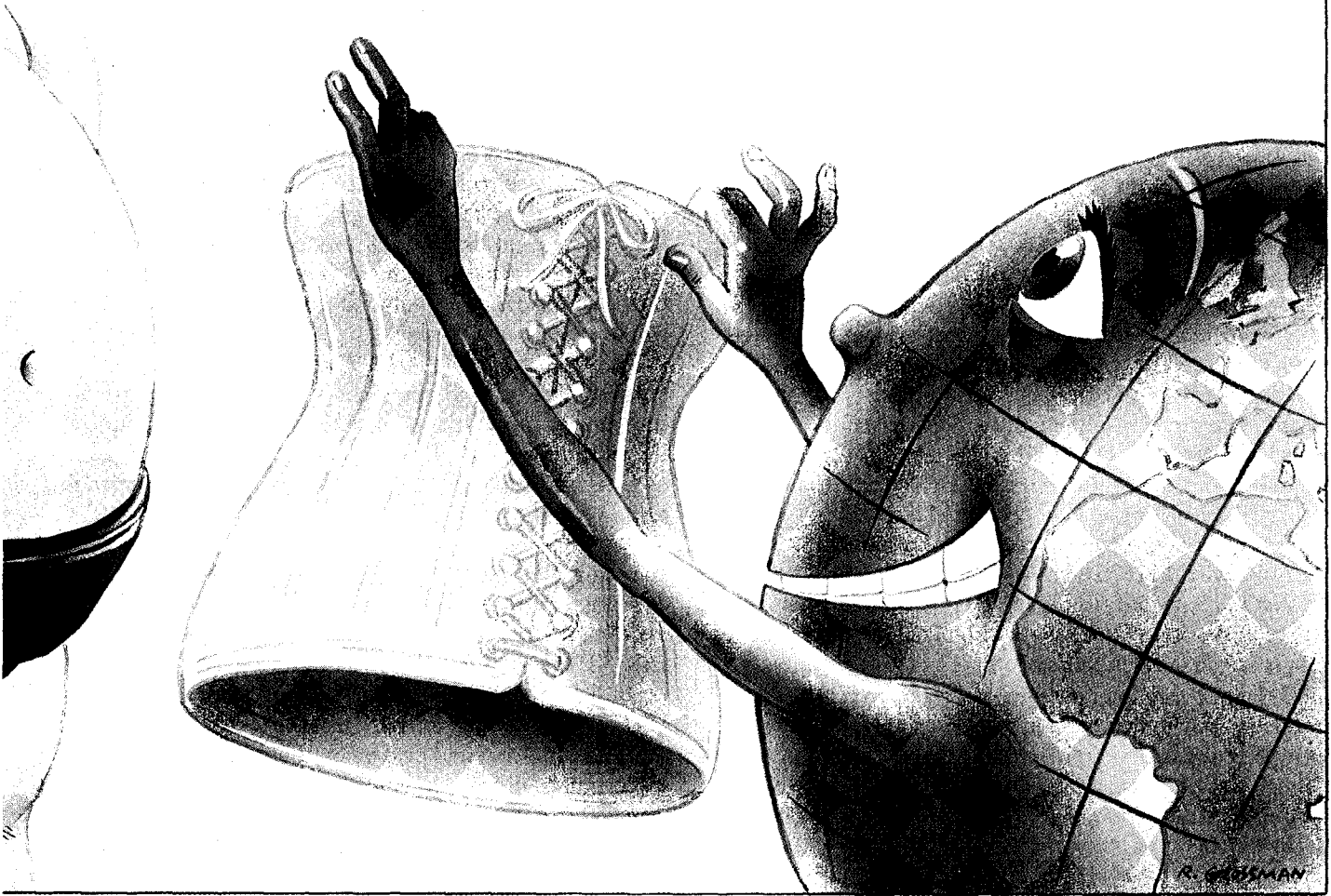
The Zenno, or National Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives, is a major cartel that sells farmers most of what they need to raise their crops and is the middleman for the government subsidies that make Japanese rice farming profitable. Some of this money is recycled back into politics: farmers and co-ops are the largest source of political contributions to the permanently ruling Liberal Democratic Party, which in turn grants them continuing protection against foreign competition. The health *zoku* protects private physicians, who enjoy a godlike status and a monopolistic position in the economy to a much greater degree than do their counterparts in the United States. Government regulations impede private companies (such as the American Humana group) from owning or operating hospitals, which are predominantly run by doctors. The Ministry of Health views birth-control pills as an extreme medication, suitable only for treating serious hormone disorders. The obvious consequence is a very high rate of condom sales, and—although accurate figures are very hard to obtain—some analysts claim that the abortion rate is notably higher than in the United States.

The significance of this system is not that it is collusive—it's the opposite of centrally coordinated—but that it is stifling. The economy is broken up into tribes, and each tribe does everything possible to prevent "confusion" in the market it regulates—"confusion" being the euphemism for real competition that would put inefficient producers out of business, offer new services, and lower prices. Only the skill and discipline of the Japanese work force in general keep the whole system from breaking down. Recently *The Japan Times*, Tokyo's main English-language paper, published an article about the huge cost gap between airline tickets bought in Japan and those bought overseas. Since a Hong Kong–Tokyo–New York ticket bought from the Japan Air Lines office in Hong Kong costs two thirds as much as a simple Tokyo–New York ticket bought from JAL in Tokyo, a thriving niche business has grown up. Agents buy tickets in Hong Kong, tear off the Hong Kong–Tokyo leg, and sell them at discount in Japan. What was the focus of the paper's concern? Not the harm to Japanese consumers but the "confusion" in the airline business that the cheaper tickets were causing, and the tragic "loss" of up to 300 million yen a month that this practice was inflicting on Japan Air Lines. JAL itself has inaugurated a scorched-earth ticket-inspection policy at Narita Airport, in an attempt to keep the (mainly Japanese) passengers with Hong Kong–fare tickets from using them. The president of JAL, Susumu Yamaji, told the *Asahi Shimbun*, "Cheap imported tickets may cause confusion in the market, so we can't recognize them." To



its credit, the *Asahi* ridiculed his explanation, and Japan's airfare regulations are starting to be criticized so widely that they may actually change. Still, the general pattern is the one Karel van Wolferen describes in his book: "The USA stresses that Japan itself stands to gain from free trade and open markets, but what it means by this—greater choices for the Japanese consumers—is not at all what the Japanese administrators understand by gain. A truly open market would undermine the domestic order, so how, in their eyes, could this ever be considered a gain for Japan?"

Americans can understand how unplanned this system is, and yet how resistant to change, by thinking about what has happened to the Democratic Party in the past twenty years. No Democrat wants the party to be dominated by small factions that help it lose presidential elections, but no one seems able to bring the factions under control. That challenge is even harder in Japan, because the flow of money is larger, the offsetting forces of grass-roots de-



mocracy are weaker, and the evidence of "failure" is more abstract. In short, the structure of Japanese politics, far from providing a brake on one-sided economic expansion, actually keeps the expansion going. Moreover, the component parts of the system intensify the appearance of adversarial trade, by discrediting the idea of reciprocity with the outside world.

Capitalistic trade is not supposed to be reciprocal on the small scale. I buy from the local grocery store, and it doesn't buy anything back from me. But capitalist theory assumes that life will be reciprocal in a larger sense. Each of us specializes in certain functions, and we use our earnings to buy from those who specialize in something else. This model, more or less unchanged since Adam Smith set it out in the *Wealth of Nations*, stands in contrast to several other ideas of how economic systems should work. One is the primitive-village model, in which small groups of people produce everything they want to use. Another is the

mercantilist system that Adam Smith was directly attacking, in which the Spanish and Portuguese empires tried to store up as much gold as they could, rather than frittering any of it away in trade. And the latest and most relevant is what Chalmers Johnson calls the "capitalist developmental state," whose prime example is Japan. Here the government uses a number of strategies to suppress consumption, channel personal savings to industrial investment, and convert industrial competition into a ratchet-like process. In the industries where the country has a lead—in Japan's case, consumer electronics and autos—it holds on to the lead, and in areas where it lags, it discourages imports until its own industries can grow. Japanese corporations typically compete with each other in every product line—each beer maker produces a draft beer, a "dry" beer, a lager, and so on; each electronics company tries to produce a full range of radios, TVs, and fax machines. Successful Japanese students are expected to get top marks in every

subject; star pitchers in Japanese baseball often burn out early because they are expected to pitch in practically every game. Trying to be on top in *every* field, rather than specializing in some and leaving the rest to competitors, is a stronger impulse in Japanese society than in most others, and is the rule that Japan's trade policy appears to follow.

Americans may complain about the decline of their steel and semiconductor industries—that is, areas where the United States once enjoyed a lead and has had to watch factories shut their doors. But few Americans really think it is a problem if we have to buy our entire supply of CD players from overseas. The United States has no government project under way to create a domestic fax industry, and when government guidance is proposed—for semiconductors, high-definition TVs, and superconductors—it is always controversial. Japan acts differently.

Japan's military-aircraft policy represents a straightforward attempt to move into the commercial aircraft industry, which Boeing, Airbus, and McDonnell Douglas now dominate. If this were not the case, Japan's military would simply buy imported planes, rather than insisting that its planes be manufactured in Japan, under license, at much higher cost. During the controversy over the FSX fighter plane this winter *The Japan Times* admitted, in an editorial, that "the overall cost would be lower" if other countries bought planes directly from the United States, but this would be "tantamount to eventual abandonment of that [aircraft] industrial sector." Right—and when I buy shoes at the store rather than cobbling at home, it is tantamount to abandoning my own shoe-making capacity.

Of course, any manufacturer should be free to enter any industry—that's how capitalism works. The problem is the one-sidedness of Japan's ambitions. By continuing to launch new industrial assaults rather than simply buying better, cheaper products from abroad, Japan suggests that it does not accept the basic reciprocal logic of world trade. If more than a handful of countries behaved this way, there couldn't be any international trade.

Underlying Principles (or the Lack of Them)

WHY IS JAPAN SO UNCONCERNED ABOUT THE DOUBLE standard of its trading policy? It has to do with the ultimate values of Japanese political life—or what can be called the lack of them. Japan is a highly honorable society, in which individuals are deeply bound by obligations of gratitude, loyalty, and deference. But Japanese society has always been short on abstract principles dictating proper treatment of those outside the network of obligations—such as foreigners. The result is Japan's distinctive view of "fair" competition and its seemingly clear conscience about one-sided behavior.

Many foreigners in Japan become captivated by *Nihonjinron*, the "study of Japanese-ness." It is a literary and intellectual genre that consists of two opposing flows. From one side comes a large outpouring of books and articles, al-

most all in Japanese, about the reasons that Japanese society and the Japanese language and Japanese brains and Japanese people are "unique." From the other side comes a smaller but more splenetic stream of rebuttals, mainly written by foreigners who have read *Nihonjinron* in Japanese and mean to expose its lunacy to the outside, English-speaking world. By Western standards of evidence, logic, and rhetoric, the latter side clearly runs away with the argument. Van Wolferen's *Enigma of Japanese Power*, for instance, is essentially one long demonstration that many traits considered to be "intrinsically" Japanese actually reflect the way power has been wielded in Japan. Why do Japanese people file so few lawsuits? *Nihonjinron* theorists say it's because of the great love of consensus, stretching back to the rice paddies of ancient Yamato, the legendary homeland of the Japanese race; Van Wolferen points out that the state-run law schools produce hardly any lawyers. (He also notes that people are "loyal" to their companies throughout their careers at least partly because no one else will hire them if they resign.)

The real importance of *Nihonjinron*, however, may be not what the sides disagree about but what they both accept: that whether the explanations are racial or political, the institutions and values of modern Japan *are* highly unusual, in ways that make it even more difficult for Japan to restrain its one-sided growth.

One important factor is Japan's lack of emotional connection to the rest of the world. "If some country does not buy cars and does not sell petroleum to us, that society does not interest us at all," the literary critic Shuichi Kato says. "The rest of the world is interesting only as it affects Japan." Every society is narcissistic to some degree, but Japan is more so than others. I have collected a big stack of speeches and newspaper articles about Japan's most controversial dealings with the rest of the world—the demands that it provide more foreign aid, its refusal to accept immigrant laborers from Asia, its trade with South Africa, its strict observance of the Arab boycott on trade with Israel. Only a few of the clippings say that it would be "good" or "right" for Japan to change its policies. The stated reason in the rest is that otherwise Japan "will be criticized," or that "more is expected of us now."

The deeper concept here is the weakness of "universal principles" in Japan—of ideas that make the Japanese feel that their lives run according to axioms similar to those of any human beings' lives around the world. As countless foreign observers have reported, the honor and discipline of Japanese life are based on highly personal loyalties—to the feudal lord, to the honor of the family, these days to the corporation. These are different from such abstract principles as charity, democracy, world brotherhood, and so on, and they lead to different kinds of behavior. The members of a tight-knit Japanese work group or neighborhood will spontaneously sacrifice more for one another than their counterparts in the United States will—but they are a lot less likely to sacrifice for someone outside the group. Volunteer work and charitable organizations,



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like the United Way and Community Chest, are virtually unknown in Japan, and there is little instinctive concern about starving children in Ethiopia, earthquake victims in Armenia, or refugees from Indochina. On the other hand, people in Japan are more likely to take care of their own.

The differing ideas about the basis of moral behavior are probably the most fundamental contrast between Japan and the West. "However calmly Americans and Europeans rationalize their old religious philosophy, it remains true that their cultural heritage, their political and social institutions have been shaped by a belief in absolute values," Frank Gibney wrote in his influential postwar book, *Five Gentlemen of Japan*. "This the Japanese conspicuously have never had." The Shinto religion has no overarching theory of behavior and virtually no scripture or teachings. (It is basically a system of local faiths that was converted by the government over the past century into a nationalist tool.) As in Mayor Daley's Chicago, in Japan the most important political disagreements, those within the Liberal Democratic Party, are struggles for power rather than clashes of policy or ideas.

ONLY ALICE

entered that brilliant intimate
room; you cannot, ever, pick
the grapes whose luster mounds the plate
or hear that gilt French clock tick.

Will not smell the red roses, ever;
taste, touch or hear. Only your eyes
watch eyes which see the face you never
will. That room is silent with surprise

and lure of inaccessible terrain.
The gilded frame surrounds a whole
of something present that explains
the old belief that it can snatch a soul.

It shows no welcome, and no malice,
ambiguous as any Mona Lisa.
You are outside. There is no talis-
man; no passport and no visa.

So stare and stay; so stare, beguiled
and balked. And there's the matter
of luck, should you know—like a furious child—
that what you may not enter, you can shatter.

—Josephine Jacobsen

To bring this back to trade: the standard complaint about Japanese trading practice is that it's hypocritical. Japanese manufacturers sell freely in the United States, but foreigners must fight their way through public and private cartels to compete in Japan. The very idea of hypocrisy, however, assumes that there is one rule of behavior, which should apply to everyone at all times. Japan's brand of morality is more "situational," applying rules that seem appropriate to each occasion. It is appropriate for American consumers to demand the best product for the money. It is also appropriate for Japan to promote its aircraft industry. My point is not to criticize the fundamentals of Japanese morality—on the whole they're less troublesome for the world than universal creeds that lead one society to try to convert everybody else. But they have an effect on Japan's international dealings that other countries, with different values, are foolish to ignore.

For example, when foreign negotiators ask Japan to embrace the principle of free trade, they run up against not only Japanese special interests that would be hurt by imports but also a broader Japanese discomfort with the very prospect of abiding by abstract principles.

A British friend gave this illustration, from the negotiations about seats for foreign firms on the Tokyo Stock Exchange: "Our position was that, in principle, any company that met the financial and other standards should be allowed to enter the market. Each time we said that, the Japanese reply was, 'How many seats do you want?' We would say, 'We don't know how many, we want it to be open to any qualified applicant.' And they would say, 'Do you want two seats? Do you want three?'" The British negotiators eventually decided that two British companies seemed qualified, so they told the Japanese, "We want two." The Japanese side went back to deliberate—and in that time another qualified British firm appeared. My friend said, "They came back to us and said that two would be all right—but by this time we were asking for three. They were incensed at us for not sticking to our word and not knowing what we wanted. I'm sure they thought it was a case of Western deception. The principle of free entry never had a chance." In the wrangle over beef and citrus imports Michael Smith, a blustery U.S. trade negotiator, got nowhere arguing that import quotas should, in principle, be relaxed. Then his side calculated that the beef quotas had a price effect equivalent to a 376 percent tariff—and he asked that the tariff be reduced, in stages, by 306 points. On the basis of this concrete demand, rather than an airy principle, a deal was struck.

Americans tend to squirm about the messiness of their two best-known trade agreements with Japan: the "voluntary limitations" that have restricted exports of Japanese cars to the United States since 1981, and the semiconductor agreement of 1986, which declared by fiat that foreign manufacturers should get 20 percent of semiconductor sales in Japan. These agreements are embarrassing to the United States because they so blatantly violate the principle of free competition; they assign market share by

fiat, rather than leaving it to the free play of competitive forces. While the details of these agreements may displease the Japanese, they are perfectly comfortable with the basic concept. Like many of their own industrial understandings, it helps avoid "confusion" in the market.

A WILLINGNESS TO OVERLOOK COLD, PURE PRINCIPLE and get down to practicalities can be seen as a virtue by Americans as well as Japanese. But Japanese society's lack of interest in principle has a profound effect that most Americans are slow to recognize. The lack of interest in principle makes sheer power the main test of what is "fair." Might makes right anywhere, but in Japan's dealings with the outside world it does so sweepingly.

In Western societies there is a constant tension between officially constituted authority and principles that reach beyond worldly authority ("Render unto Caesar . . ."). These principles become the main grounds for a challenge to authority. People can throw tea in Boston Harbor, or overthrow the Czar, or refuse to pay their taxes, or tack a list of theses on the door, on the grounds that the authorities are not living up to some higher standard. But to do so, they must first believe in abstract, transcendent principles. The weakness of such principles in Japanese life makes it much harder to lodge a legitimate challenge to authority. (The most famous and flamboyant rebellions in Japanese history have usually been gestures of personal or clan loyalty, or efforts to erase a stain on individual honor, as when the Minister of War committed suicide after Emperor Hirohito ordered surrender, in 1945.) As a result, the Japanese are more likely to believe that what *is* is right—and to adjust themselves to changing realities of power.

The most dramatic wartime example, eloquently described in Frank Gibney's book, is the lightning change in the Japanese public attitude after the army surrendered. Only weeks after women and children had been preparing to defend the home islands with bamboo swords, the public cooperated with the Occupation authorities with a minimum of insubordination and sabotage. When the wartime Cabinet had authority, it was obeyed; when MacArthur did, he was. I've heard many Japanese in their sixties and seventies say that they always thought the war was a terrible idea. Their comments are not Japan's version of "We were all against the Nazis," since the same people freely say that they fought wholeheartedly in the Emperor's name. The significance is that they thought the war was suicidal but were still ready to go ahead without com-

plaint. Once, while riding in a Japanese friend's car, I was stuck in traffic, along with fifty other cars, behind a dozen *bosozoku*, or "wild boys," in a motorcycle gang. For more than thirty minutes they slowed traffic on one of Japan's few highways to about five miles an hour, blockading all the lanes and not letting anyone pass. During all that time not a single car honked its horn, not a single driver waved his fist, not a single person did what drivers in most other cultures would have done, such as ramming the bikers or running over them. Yes, this passivity is better than gunning other motorists down, as in Los Angeles; but I interpreted it less as gentleness than as reluctance to take individual action against what was, for the moment, the established power.

The conclusion is not that average Japanese people are mindless followers but that, like Catholic priests and members of the Marine Corps, they live in a culture that honors authority. And what this means, in turn, for U.S.-Japanese relations is that the *appearance* of American power is more important than most Americans fully realize.

It's hard to imagine a strictly internal force that could push Japan off its current path, even though more and more Japanese realize that their lives would be easier and their country would be better liked if its economy were less lopsided. The political system is gridlocked by powerful moneyed groups, and the customs and the intellectual tradition of the country discourage those who otherwise might protest. (When I ask Japanese friends why they aren't angrier about anti-consumer policies or the increasingly visible political corruption, they often reply with a phrase that means "It's been arranged—there's nothing to be done.") What is left, then, as a way of changing Japan's internal behavior is pressure from outside. This principle is so widely recognized that the Japanese term *gaiatsu* is used much more frequently here than the comparable words, "outside pressure," are used in America. Since the end of the Second World War the main source of *gaiatsu* has been the United States, which first imposed a Constitution and a new social order on Japan, during the Occupation, and after that began "demanding" liberalizations in Japan's economic behavior. Many Japanese seem to understand why the constant nagging occurs and why it eventually improves their standard of living. ("Will people say they want imported rice or beef?" one Japanese friend said. "Of course not. Will they accept it when we 'give in' to American demands? Yes, and most will be grateful.") The problem with relying on *gaiatsu*, however, is that whoever is pushing from outside must be unchallengeably strong. If he seems to falter, he is like a rough-and-tough



Unless Japanese society changes fundamentally, it is hard to imagine that any of Japan's great power centers—banks, manufacturers—will ever share power with non-Japanese.

drill instructor who loses a fistfight with one of the recruits and can no longer intimidate by his mere stare. His main source of authority is gone.

This is why the appearance of American economic decline and social disintegration, highly exaggerated as it may be in Japan, can do almost as much damage as the real thing. If America's strength seems to wane, so does the main hope for obtaining "normal" economic behavior from Japan. "The Japanese . . . are peculiarly sensitive to the smell of decay, however well screened," Kurt Singer, a German expatriate who lived in Japan before the First World War, said in his eloquent little book *Mirror, Sword, and Jewel*, "and they will strike at an enemy whose core appears to betray a lack of firmness." Of course Japan is not about to attack in any military or overtly hostile way. But the smell of decay that now seems to be wafting across the Pacific from America is a tremendous obstacle to Japanese liberalization. Most Americans living in Japan scan the news each day for industrial-output and trade figures, for signs of robust recovery and the appearance of strength from the United States. They know that the Japanese political system, like Japan's constellation of economic forces, cannot save Japan from its excesses.

What Will Change

WHAT PRECISELY IS THE DANGER FROM CONTINUED Japanese expansion? Some people say there is no danger at all. Three lines of reasoning lead to such a conclusion.

The first is that whether or not the expansion can be controlled, it is about to end. Many Japanese people, temperamentally pessimistic even though their country has repeatedly surmounted prophecies of doom, fall into this camp. So do some outside observers, such as Bill Emmott, of *The Economist*, who in his book *The Sun Also Sets*, which will be published late this year, points to a number of long-term trends running against Japan. The population will soon have the world's highest proportion of retirees and will be using up some of the savings it is amassing now; Korea and Taiwan will exert unrelenting pressure; at some point the yen may rise so far that it actually does price Japanese exporters out of the world market. And let's not forget the next big earthquake. In addition, certain divisions are opening within Japanese society, which could eventually impair the country's ability to sacrifice, invest, and grow. Besides cynicism about Japan's money-politics system and the rise of an affluent and perhaps less self-sacrificing yuppie generation, a noticeable gap is opening up between Japanese haves and have-nots. This class divide has to do mainly with land ownership—land has become so expensive that people who do not inherit it from their parents can probably never afford their own house—but also with education, which is becoming stratified. In theory, such developments could limit Japan's growth quite soon. However, the limits are still purely theoretical; no symptom of slowdown can yet be observed. By every mea-

surable indication—corporate profit, personal savings, industrial productivity—Japan is distinctly on the rise.

According to the second line of reasoning, Japan's expansion cannot, by definition, be threatening to anyone else, since it merely increases the wealth and welfare of customers in the rest of the world. This is the classic free-trade view, which often guides U.S. government policy toward Japan and which dominates the view of the American media. On its own narrow terms, it is obviously correct: consumers are always better off with fewer restrictions on trade. Indeed, the main reason American consumers now live so much better than those in Japan is that U.S. policy has hewed closer to free trade.

Inconveniently, offering consumers the best price is not the only thing involved in building a good society. Permitting children to work in garment factories, for instance, would lower the price of shirts and help the American consumer, but it is against the broader national interest. In the case of Japan's expansion, the harm comes from the erosion of numerous elements of American strength, especially those being left to erode because of a sense that the United States is so deep in debt that it can't afford to do many of the things a leading power should do—explore space, improve its schools, maintain its military bases in Japan so that Japan doesn't build its own army, and so on.

From the strict free-trade perspective, not even the accumulation of debt is necessarily a cause for worry. The borders between Japan and the United States are increasingly artificial to corporate managers and to consumers, who buy Sony Walkmen in Chicago and McDonald's hamburgers in Tokyo. Perhaps the borders should be ignored in observing capital flows as well. No one cares about the Texas state "deficit" relative to Illinois; we concentrate on how individual firms are doing. Some Japanese internationalists suggest that the overall U.S.-Japan balances should also be overlooked. This is noble-sounding and forward-looking, but the fact is that Japan and the United States still are two separate nations, and America's ability to pay its own way still is the basis of its strength. The United States can't tax the Japanese to pay for its military—it can only borrow. Until national borders really don't matter, America's ability to meet its commitments will depend on its own solvency, not on the size of the combined U.S.-Japanese capital pool.

This is related to the third line of reasoning: that reasonably soon the borders between Japan and the United States will for all practical purposes disappear. Japan and the United States, which already interact closely in business and the military, will integrate themselves in other ways and, despite remaining separate countries, will function essentially as one unit.

Anyone who has spent time in Japan will recognize how attractive such a merger would be. These two countries, with their respective economic strengths, technical skills, political ideologies, and sources of social resilience, make up two complementary halves of the mightiest possible superstate. I would be delighted by the creation of a hybrid

U.S.-Japanese state. For all its difficulties, Tokyo is a more stimulating place to live than almost any city in America. I would rather work with my best Japanese friends than for most companies in the United States, and would rather bind Japan's strengths to America's than view Japan as a threat. But like most other foreigners who have lived in Japan, I consider such a *de facto* merger impossible, because of social resistance on the Japanese side.

Some Japanese idealists contend, quite sincerely, that their society is on the verge of radical change. The millions of Japanese who travel overseas each year, and the hundreds of thousands posted to foreign countries on long assignments, presumably come home with a more open, internationalized point of view. Eventually they will demand a fairer political system and a more consumer-minded economy, and will open their society in the way it is now most closed: the visceral reaction against non-Japanese intruders among the "pure race" Japanese. At that point, according to the optimists, Japanese and Americans (and other foreigners) will work alongside one another as individuals, aware of their national identities but not separated by them.

I admire the idealists and hope they turn out to be right, but nothing I have seen so far makes me believe that they will. Despite Japan's boom in international travel, the proportion of its people who go abroad is lower than that in any other industrialized country—roughly five percent a year in recent years, versus 45 percent for England and 15 percent for even the famously parochial United States. (Also, most Japanese travel is in tightly organized and highly insulated groups, not exactly the ideal means for deep exposure to foreign societies.) Our Japanese neighbors often ask, in all innocence, whether prices here are higher or lower than those in the United States. We usually don't have the heart to give them a frank reply. And even if people became actively (and atypically) unhappy with their daily lives, the full brunt of Japanese political power would, again, stand in the way of change. The closing words of Karel van Wolferen's book are "The wonderful alternative of turning the [political and economic] System into a genuine modern constitutionalist state, and Japanese subjects into citizens, would require realignments of power akin to those of a genuine revolution."

National merger is not even occurring on the modest level of the corporation, as opposed to the level of the nation-state. American and European multinationals are typically "unpatriotic"—they shift production from country to country and hire talent wherever they can find it. Shell is a Dutch firm in theory, though not in daily operation or promotion policy. IBM is an American company but in its overseas operations takes pride in turning itself into a German, a French, a Japanese firm. Japanese corporations are now investing worldwide, but they still have a distinct national identity. Non-Americans run important divisions of major American-based multinationals; Japa-

nese citizens run virtually all important divisions of major Japanese firms. A recent MITI study found that Japanese multinationals operating outside Japan differed from European and American companies operating in Japan in two ways. The Japanese companies had lower profit margins, because they concentrated on market share; and they selected many fewer non-Japanese for management jobs. Unless Japanese society changes fundamentally, it is hard to imagine that Mitsubishi, Matsushita, the Dai-Ichi Kangyo Bank, or any of Japan's other great power centers will ever share their power with non-Japanese. "Westerners do have to think about one day being the noncommissioned officers in Japan's economic army," the columnist Richard Reeves wrote last year. "The new Horatio Alger story could have the hero starting with nothing and by dint of hard work and pluck rising all the way to the middle."

Unless Japan is contained, therefore, several things that matter to America will be jeopardized: America's own authority to carry out its foreign policy and advance its ideals, American citizens' future prospects within the world's most powerful business firms, and also the very system of free trade that America has helped sustain since the Second World War. The major threat to the free-trade system does not come from American protectionism. It comes from the example set by Japan. Japan and its acolytes, such as Taiwan and Korea, have demonstrated that in head-on industrial competition between free-trading societies and "capitalist developmental states," the free traders will eventually lose. The drive to break up the world into trading blocs—united Europe, North America, East Asia—is largely fueled by other countries' desire to protect themselves against Japan. Even in their own inroads into the Japanese market, foreigners are tempted to settle for a small place in the *dango*—"Do you want two seats? Do you want three?"—rather than pushing for truly open competition in Japan. The ideal of free trade retreats, as the states that don't really believe in it expand.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS ARTICLE IS TO MAKE THE CASE for containing Japan's expansion, rather than to discuss specific means of containment. The specifics will be the subject of a future article. But merely recognizing that American and Japanese interests do conflict is in itself an essential step. It frees us of the delusion that normal business competition will balance out whatever is unbalanced now.

Of course America needs to reform its own corporate practices, improve its schools, and reduce its debt. Of course our economic goal should be an open free-trading system around the world, not escalating trade barriers. Of course we have no business telling the Japanese how to run their own subtle, sophisticated society. But we do have the right to defend our interests and our values, and they are not identical to Japan's. □

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A Short Story



ESTHER

BY HANIF KUREISHI

“YOU ARE OBVIOUSLY A SENSITIVE MAN.” She came to see him for the first time one afternoon to discuss the possibility of taking a master’s degree under his supervision, and this is what she said to him. Turning Esther Wilson down was not really an option, his department head implied. So Ray Ford simply turned, in his mind, against her. He would be cool with her. And why not? She was clearly well connected; her husband gave generously to the university, or something in that line. Dinner parties had to be involved—they always were. Privilege had not passed her by; surely she didn’t require being liked by him as well?

Esther was in her middle fifties, but now, when women in their sixties were wearing track suits and taking up windsurfing, she seemed older. She wore the sort of shoes women pruned roses in, and blouses, cardigans, and tweed skirts, all expensive, well made, and exquisitely undistinguished. Her clothes didn’t seem to agree with her; they misrepresented her. They looked as if, in a shop, she didn’t quite know what to buy, perhaps because she didn’t know who she was. He laughed at this projection; he was like this, he knew.

She was alert, she spoke quietly, she was self-deprecating. Off she went, feeling her way into understanding, leaning forward, fist clenched, and then she withdrew, just in case. “But perhaps I’m wrong, perhaps I’m hopelessly off the mark.”

“Perhaps you are.”

“Yes, I’m sure I am.”

This was her manner, not her character. Still, it irritated him: he wondered if older women developed this trait of caution so as not to seem too irritatingly certain of things. Certainty would be the domain of their husbands.

But in Esther self-doubt and self-questioning were not a weakness; they were a passion, they distinguished her. Ray preferred this to the behavior of middle-aged, middle-class women who returned to university when their children left home and who shouted out self-important questions at his lectures and went to dances as if they were eighteen.

Ray was in his early forties and immature. How could he not be if he couldn’t get his hands and feelings to stick to any woman, even though he’d advertised in *Time Out*? He’d begun to think women were shallow to set such store

by appearances. He’d arranged to meet one woman in a pub he knew to be badly lit. He arrived early, bought a bottle of wine, and set down two glasses, so that she didn’t have to see him walk to the bar. As they drank, they fed each other questions on the mutual interests they’d corresponded about, the theater and Graham Greene. And he wondered if this was the woman he’d spend the rest of his life with—until she excused herself and never returned. The other women had been lacking in the mental area. Young women students turned him into a lecher. As they fled, he pursued, all hands, until he hated them.

But at least with the young women undergraduates he could flirt; he could patronize and show off. He could sit smoking in his airless, modern college room, looking out on the London traffic, his poor feet up on a chair, *Blonde on Blonde* playing as he lectured on American literature of the 1960s. They had to call him Doctor. But Esther called him Ray from the beginning. To contain her growing interest in him, he needed to be formal. She wanted to be easy.

Esther wasn’t discouraged by Ray’s polite indifference. She began to go to his undergraduate lectures on Lawrence and Joyce and even Orton, writers not on the syllabus when she’d been at Oxford. After the lecture, as he crookedly propelled himself on crutches to the lift (he’d had arthritis as a child, which had slowed his growing as well as hampered his walking), she would accompany him, but diffidently, making gentle jokes, holding her books and papers in her arms, and carrying his lecture notes, too, as he swung and grunted in effort, a real Gregor Samsa. And the young students rushed off past them to the bar, to the common rooms, to take drugs and have sex, which is what he wished he were doing.

Over the years he had heard students calling him Quasimodo, and the Cripple, and he laughed at their innocent cruelty. Esther’s sympathy was far worse. Esther, with inquiring kind eyes that rarely left his swollen face, saw the physical pain that never, for a minute, left him alone. He had reason to suspect that she saw the need and longing, the distorted emotional life, vitiated by shame and rejection and physical isolation. She would know, surely, exactly how much people need to be touched!

Soon she was always in his room, making him tea properly in a pot, buying him a tea strainer and two pretty bone-china cups. She brought florentines from a bakery in



South Kensington, and he ate them eagerly, like a school-boy, two or three in a session. She had come to university to talk, to inquire into every damn thing, to know other people—him!—intensely, intimately again.

"Tell me . . . do you—it may be an impertinent question—"

"No, no, I'm sure it's not. Please—"

"All right, Ray. . ." She sipped her tea, put her head to one side. She was small and delicate and determined to know and feel.

"Have your feelings toward your students changed over the years?"

"Yes."

"Is it confusing?"

How could he explain? She always asked the right and yet wrong questions, the most tormenting. In the old days he provided the dope the students smoked; they came to his flat, they watched movies together. Once he'd been in a pornographic film some of them had shot, a sub-Warhol effort called *Camden Girls*, in which he played a naked dwarf who carried drinks on a silver tray to the young copulating students. But slowly they'd come to bore him. Esther Wilson, virtually an old woman, was informed about theater, film, television, ideas. If he mentioned that a certain newspaper had deteriorated, she would know how this had happened. "Oh, yes, terrible, and the editor, Jonathan—we do know him a bit—is very much aware of the proprietor. Thinks he can resist him. Can you imagine?"

Esther read Ray's essay on Wilkie Collins, published in an academic journal. One afternoon, on an impulse, as she sat opposite him in his room and showed no sign of wanting to leave, he gave her the first draft of his book on Dickens, which she immediately took to the library. She knew how to read, which was a rare talent, as difficult as carpentry. He waited nervously for two days. On her triumphant return she gave him line-by-line criticism. The early evening they spent together in a wine bar nearby. He told her about his illness, how very sick he'd been for so long at school, and how hard he'd worked to develop his mind (he was proud of his head, he told her), and how the library was his gymnasium until he'd been adjudged brilliant and awarded the first job he applied for.

After this, when they parted regretfully, with volumes still to say, he didn't want to be alone, so he drove to South London, where he visited his parents, who still lived in the terraced house he had been brought up in. He and his father discussed horse racing, and Trollope. His mother, wearing a pink housecoat, did his washing. They were cheerful but seemed old. They worried too much, and seeing them living a life of total habit made him long for more life.

He went round the corner in the rain and had fish and chips for supper, not wanting to ask his mother to cook him something. At ten he visited a prostitute, a fleshy, hippy woman who imagined he liked listening to Leonard Cohen when they had sex. She was right in one sense: the music

did delay his climax. Unfortunately, her bed, a mattress, was on the floor, and once he got down onto it, he couldn't get up again. When she returned from the bathroom, expecting to see him ready to leave, he was flailing on his back like an overturned beetle, still in his shirt, for he refused to let her see his body.

He went home and sat in his room, memorizing his daily poem. Loneliness washed over him like a freezing sea. Must he always suffer this disjunction between mind and body, intellect and feeling?



ONE DAY ESTHER INVITED HIM TO A MATINEE OF *The Beggar's Opera*, at the National Theatre. He couldn't think of any reason not to go, but he knew that somehow the invitation would lead to trouble. Esther told him about herself for the first time. Her husband, she said hesitantly, was the Conservative MP Walter Wilson, a junior minister in the Thatcher Government, a handsome, clever man on his way up, known for his glamour and his right-wing views. Thatcher liked him; he would go far. Wilson wasn't in the suburban wing of the party either, among the sort who read Wilbur Smith novels on holiday. He was cultured, witty. At one time, in the sixties, he'd been a journalist in Washington.

Esther was grander than Ray had thought. Why hadn't she told him all this before? Did she think he'd be repelled by it? Or did she want to be seen, quite rightly, as completely separate from her husband?

Whatever the reason, Ray reminded himself, you shouldn't personalize politics. Yet on the way home, after she'd told him about her husband, he repeated to himself a phrase often used at Cambridge in the sixties: "objective class enemy."

"Although Walter is a politician," Esther said, as they walked slowly along the Embankment, "he knows a lot of people in other fields. He loathes talking politics; it bores him stiff." Then she stopped and said, "We thought you might like to come and have dinner one evening. Would you?" She paused again, as if she understood how complicated this could be for him. "Don't reply now. Just let me know on Monday. But I would like it very much if you did come." Ray was flattered by the invitation. He wanted to pursue this; he was excited. But he didn't want to conceal his views for the sake of a meal and a glimpse at people he'd only read about.

That weekend he felt he should discuss it with two ex-students. They were among his closest friends. One lived in a filthy studio and worked in a bookshop; he was unambitious and contemptuous of the straight world. The other was a drug dealer to the rich who wanted only enough money to build a gargantuan record collection. Ray had taught them both; they still read (Hunter S. Thompson and Coleridge), but they did nothing. "You're just elitist drifters!" he said, losing his temper. They couldn't see his dilemma over Esther's dinner invitation. All those people were "boring, fascist, decadent." He should, they said, go to the Wilsons' house and crap in their beds—maybe then they'd see what it is to be hated.

Ray had a bath, which was a considerable effort, and put himself into his beige Yves Saint Laurent suit, the only decent clothes he had. He hoped the evening would be worth the supreme effort.

The Wilsons' flat was in a quiet street off the King's Road; they also had a house outside Cambridge. At the door Esther kissed Ray and patted his hand. This was the first time they had touched. He noticed she was wearing scent, and pearl earrings. Her arms were bare, thin and veined, almost transparent. The flat was full of old things: the books were leather bound, and there were rugs and antique tables and candlesticks. It was a gloomy place. He hated ornaments. Naturally he was the first to arrive, being stupid enough to get there on time. Then Esther disappeared for ages and Ray heard the clock ticking as he sat there on the hard chair she had provided. Otherwise all was silent. Noise and other people were what money sealed you off from.

Walter Wilson burst in with one arm outstretched, as if the arm were pulling him along. He was a large, confident, powerful man, who quickly poured drinks and said how pleased he was—and he looked pleased. He said he liked Wilkie Collins, education was better appreciated when you were older, and not to worry if he suddenly left the flat—he might have to go and vote in the House of Commons. Ray saw how much more energy Wilson had than anyone else he knew; this man was like an athlete among weekend exercisers.

Other people arrived, four couples in all, including a journalist called Robert Mansfield whom Ray had once admired so much that he bought a weekly paper just to read his column. Mansfield had turned to the right in the late seventies and repudiated his former opinions. Now he was pompous and had a face the color of boiled ham. Ray began to panic. He kept spilling things in his lap. He didn't want to speak to this man, whatever happened.

At dinner Esther placed Ray between herself and a fair-haired gay man of about his age, a Ronald Firbank enthusiast who worked for a literary paper. Pierre Carter was obviously more Esther's friend than Walter's. Ray wondered if she unconsciously chose male friends who couldn't threaten Walter. "Walter's always trying to introduce me to girls," Carter said. "Walter can't believe that everyone can't be like him. By the way, Esther, I met an estate agent

today who made me realize exactly what Proudhon meant when he wrote 'property is theft.' In Vietnam it's the Year of the Cat, or Earwig, or whatever. Here it's the Year of the Estate Agent, isn't it?"

Ray enjoyed listening to Pierre. At the university he didn't run up against much charm, not this effort to entertain, not these wild stories about people he'd heard of—publishers and writers. He could cheerfully have listened for hours, even though things he considered valuable were mocked and he kept being made to feel that nothing mattered, not literature, not ideas, not objectivity, only jokes and the saying of clever things.

Still, the evening would soon be over, time was passing without mishap. Or at least it seemed to be, until Ray noticed a disturbance at the other end of the table. Robert Mansfield—a man who'd excoriated Harold Wilson over Vietnam and ripped into Alec Douglas-Home and then later claimed that the day Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister was the happiest day of his life—was having a vociferous conversation with Walter Wilson, and the discussion was rolling down the table like a storm, blowing the heads of the guests from side to side.

"Now, take the sixties, if you want to take the blasted sixties," Mansfield was saying. "They were the truly wasted years, weren't they? What an age of puerile and harmful illusions! What utter idiots and vapid cranks the ordure of 'liberation' fertilized. Buckminster Fuller, Marshall McLuhan—"

Wilson intervened. "Fanon," he said firmly. "Marcuse. Malcolm X—"

"R. D. Laing."

"R. D. Laing, exactly. Szasz. Schumacher." It became a game. They searched out the names of fools and spat them out and laughed. "And who reads them now?" Mansfield said. "What have they contributed?"

"Nothing," Wilson agreed. "Bloody fools."

"If these people were such fools, why was their influence so deeply felt?" Pierre asked.

"Sartre," Mansfield added.

"A mind like an African desert," Wilson said.

Esther nodded at Pierre and then looked at her husband for the first time that evening. Ray noticed that her color was high: she was defiant, hopeful, pleased. Walter must have made her very angry over the years. Then Ray saw that Walter was staring at him.

"What's your view?" Wilson asked, challenging. Perhaps it was like this in the House of Commons. People asked you simple questions that required complicated replies and then glared at you as if your life depended on the answer. "You must have been around then, Ray," Wilson said.

"Yes, I was at Cambridge in '68."

Robert Mansfield was watching him too. "In the eye of the storm, eh?" Mansfield said. "So tell us—tell us what you think now."

Ray stopped eating. He wasn't enjoying the food as he thought he would; he couldn't concentrate on it.

"Things needed shaking up," he said. "They really did." The table fell silent. Plainly, this wasn't enough. Even Esther expected more. Given his education, his position, his being here at the table at all, surely he could come up with more than "things needed shaking up."

"The times were more exciting then, intellectually, than they are now. The thinkers you mentioned—disparaged—they were opening up new areas of inquiry."

"Rubbish," Mansfield said. "Thank God we've flung out those cranks and redefined freedom. As if freedom were license and emotion and something called self-expression."

"It was a romantic time—"

"Don't—"

"But—"

"Don't, I said, don't you dare insult Wordsworth!" Mansfield shouted. "You should know better, Doctor!"

The conversation turned to the topic of freedom. Ray's opinion was not sought on this subject.



THE NEXT TIME HE SAW ESTHER, SHE SAID, "I HOPE it wasn't too awful."

"No, it wasn't," he said. It was true. That day, directing the students in an Ionesco play, he'd walked out, bored by them.

The conversation at Esther's that night had stimulated him. How long was it since he'd examined his beliefs? What was socialism to him? Did he still believe in equality? What was the relation between his ideas and the way he behaved? He spent several evenings writing down only what he honestly thought and felt. He told Esther this, and she seemed pleased. Still, the two of them had never discussed politics, and she changed the subject.

"By the way, Pierre wants to know if you'd review a book for them."

"Yes, of course," Ray said immediately. "It'll be an honor." This thrilled him more than he could say. He liked being an academic, but more than anything, he'd wanted to be part of the London literary world, writing reviews and articles and perhaps one day having a column of his own. Maybe now, with Esther's help, he was on his way. He wrote the review immediately—they were surprised by his speed—and within a few weeks it was published and he was asked to do another. To thank Esther he took her out to dinner.

He started to talk about how much difficulty he had meeting women of his "age, size, and sensibility." This was the hardest thing in his concealed life to talk about, and he'd longed to broach it, but now, just when he got started, Esther interrupted.

"Ray, I shouldn't be talking about this. I haven't told anyone, but you're a friend, I know. Walter has been having an affair with the woman who's been his assistant for some years. It is a common occurrence; many MPs, many men of his age, do the same, and normally I wouldn't bore you with it. But now he tells me he wants to part from the woman. Only she is threatening suicide. He spends hours speaking to her on the phone every night. He really wants to disengage himself, but the conversation always returns to one thing. He goes back to her or she ends her life."

Ray took Esther home and went in for a whiskey. At eleven o'clock Walter came home, and he sat with Ray. Esther left them to talk. Walter was gentler tonight, and attentive. He talked about the Tory Party and how it worked; he asked Ray questions about structuralism—what it was, exactly—and pondered the replies. With an expensive mechanical pencil he made a note of books Ray recommended. Ray felt himself being seduced by this important, thinking man. Walter now wasn't just another man who picked women up and threw them down when he'd finished with them: he was tragic, he followed his impulses to the end, he had much to give and a hunger for life. The telephone rang. Esther came into the room to tell Walter it was for him, and Ray went home.

A few days later Esther missed Ray's lecture but came to see him after, in his room. "I went to see Walter's mistress, Kate," she said. "Well. She was wearing a dressing gown. She'd been drinking. She was in a state. She told me that during the five years of their affair Walter promised on several occasions to divorce me and marry her. She became pregnant last year, and Walter insisted she have an abortion, saying the time wasn't right for them to have children. Now she is forty and wonders if the time may have passed. I think she is a decent woman, kind and sensitive."

"She will eventually recover, don't you think?" Ray said. "Not that I'd know anything about it. But I've read that people do, eventually, pull through."

Esther wasn't listening. "Walter has led her a dance. She was of use to him when he was writing his book. She supported him when he lost his nerve as a politician—something that happens frequently, I can tell you. She has obviously given him her heart and he has shown her the door."

"Esther, are you going to be all right?"

"Meeting her distressed me. It has made Walter seem callous, hard, distant. When someone tells you they love you, they must, I think, open their heart, and he has often said he loved me. The word *love* implies an absolute giving, doesn't it? And when you find they have not given you their heart but concealed a large part of their life from you, you feel pitied." Esther sobbed. Ray felt useless and irritated. How had he got dragged into all this? What could he be expected to do or say?

Esther got up. But as soon as she was on her feet, her legs went and she fell over, there in his small room with the windows you couldn't open. She fell onto her knees, her hand snatching down photographs and postcards he'd stuck to the wall. Then she went forward onto her face.

Ray, on one crutch, went to her as she lay there shaking. Loosen the clothing, he thought. He fiddled with the top of Esther's cardigan. "Nothing human is alien to me," he repeated. To get away while seeming to be effective, he hurried up the deserted corridor to the water fountain. When he returned, Esther had moved; she was trying to sit up. As she did so, she waved at something across the room. Yes, she was pointing at the wastepaper basket. He handed her the heavy metal bucket as it was, half full of the screwed-up paper he'd been writing his latest review on. She vomited with three involuntary barks, ejecting a rush of thin and surprisingly dark soup that found its way to the bottom of the bucket, where it discovered a hole through which it seeped. He'd have to clean it up. But how? No—he'd leave the bucket outside for the cleaner. Not his job to clean things up. He was employed to think.

VICTIM OF HIMSELF

He thought he saw a long way off the ocean cresting and falling, bridging the continents, carrying the whole sound of human laughter and moans—especially moans, in the mud of misery—but what he saw was already diluted, evaporating, and what he felt were his teeth grinding and the bubbles of saliva that broke on his tongue.

He was doomed to be a victim of himself. He thought he saw, in the future, numberless, cavernous burials—the outcome of plagues, of wars, of natural disasters created by human beings—but what he saw was already faded, disintegrating, and what he felt was the normal weakness displayed by droopy eyes and muscles that bleated meekly.

He thought he saw from Earth up to the stars and from any one moment back to the hour of his birth when desire produced, in the slush of passionate tides, a citizen of mud and ash, of lost light and dry beds, but what he saw was already distorted, moving away, and what he felt was a sense of loss that so often he had been at peace in her arms when he did not intend to be.

—Marvin Bell

"I feel better now."

He drove Esther home. For three weeks he didn't hear from her. He didn't ring and she didn't appear at tutorials. He imagined that things were sorting themselves out and life would return to normal. All the same, he found himself becoming angry with her. For God's sake, he didn't want his mind full of these people's lives, their genitals, their self-inflicted problems! England was teeming with people suffering because of this government, people in bad housing, the unemployed, children in rotten schools. He started to despise Esther, and resented the weakness of his involvement with her. At the same time, this was something he wanted to discuss with her. It was in the evenings that he missed her the most—not that he had ever seen her often after six. It was that he missed having talked to her during the day, and by evening his mind was crammed with things he felt she should know.

THREE WEEKS LATER, QUITE UNEXPECTEDLY, SHE came to see him again. She hadn't brought her books with her, nor had she brought cakes; this was a different age. She sat down and looked directly at him. She was in a hurry.

"How are you, Ray?"

"Yes, fine. And you?"

"I'm so ashamed. I haven't done a stroke of work."

"You have time, Esther. You always tell me to take time with my work."

"Yes, you should. Some terrible things have happened, you know."

"Yes?"

But he thought: they are terrible to you, who have nothing more important than the intricacies of human relationships to think about. He didn't say this.

"Walter's friend, Kate—"

"Yes, how is she? Coming round?"

"She died. She committed suicide."

"She actually did it?" he said stupidly, but she didn't notice his stupidity.

"We heard nothing from her for a few days, which was unusual, since she rang frantically every night. Walter had given her the name of a psychiatrist he thought she might go to. Then her sister rang to say she'd found Kate dead. She'd been dead for thirty-six hours. The family is very bitter. They blame Walter."

Ray and Esther walked in Green Park until dark. The effort exhausted him. His whole body ached, but he couldn't complain. He thought constantly of the woman Kate and of the difficulty and seriousness of loving.

That night Ray was tired, but he dragged himself to supper with some ex-Cambridge friends. He shouldn't have gone, but how could he have known the day's events would stir him up so much?

He had three friends to whom, along with their three wives and five children, he was always Uncle Ray. The conversation, relaxed but serious, informed, and elliptical,

was about books and television and mutual friends, before it moved inevitably to the Labour Party, its present weakness and how they'd all hated it in the late sixties and had wanted it destroyed to allow a revolutionary party of the working class to emerge. Now they wanted the Labour Party back in power in almost any form. They discussed the universities, the cuts in funding, the lack of belief in objective research and scholarship. More rich American students would be treating the universities like finishing schools. Little, it seemed, could be done as the age slipped into philistinism. People like themselves were not required, Ray realized. "We're misguided jokes," someone said. "Highly educated and capable and yet totally irrelevant." The children slept in the bedrooms; the grown-ups drank cognac. At the weekend they would take the children swimming and have a picnic. You retreated into private satisfactions, into families. What you believed politically was a matter of words, perhaps of feeling—anger—but never of action.

Ray was drunk when he got home, and he knocked a bookcase over with his crutch. Once again he was alone; no one knew where he was or what he was doing. His existence was not recorded in any other human mind, except perhaps Esther's. He sat at his typewriter and inserted four pieces of paper into the machine, with ancient carbon paper between the sheets. He wrote the letter three times like this, not wanting to risk photocopying. At four in the morning he finished and went out to post the letters. He had to post them immediately: in a few hours his fury, his courage, would evaporate. A policeman asked him if everything was all right. Ray told him he was an insomniac.

The letters were addressed to the Prime Minister and to the editors of three newspapers. They disclosed the facts about Walter Wilson and the suicide of his mistress. Ray had included a lot of detail, so that they would take him seriously. Here it was, then, a mere letter written by him. How could such a thing damage a government?

But the story did come out. Predictably, the papers were cautious at first. Wilson's "assistant" had committed suicide. Then, a day later, Kate's family spoke to the press, confirming the affair and revealing Wilson's numerous promises and deceptions. The story got onto the front pages. It would run for a while. Damage would be done.

At college Ray discussed the scandal with friends and colleagues. He wanted to tell people what he'd done, that all this embarrassment was due to his initiative, but he had to suppress this wish.

He read the papers and watched all the television news programs. After the first few days of revelations and references to "Wilson's recent suicide love," followed by "No comment" from the MP, Wilson and his friends fought back, smearing the dead woman. She was promiscuous (a list of boyfriends appeared), perhaps drugs were involved;

mental illness was certainly a factor. Wilson, apparently, was going to get away with it; after all, wasn't he just a normal full-blooded man?

Then the sister went on television. Kate's sister was soft-featured, with rosy cheeks; she was nervous and middle-class. Ray knew immediately that the public would believe her before a smooth-chopped politician. Wilson's ease and confidence before the cameras and press didn't help him now; it made him seem shallow and uncaring. The sister read her statement, saying how Kate had loved Wilson, trusted him, been faithful to him, and how he had left her, driving her to despair. She produced a letter from Wilson that confirmed these things. This finished him. He resigned. He went away.

Ray woke up one day six months later to find he'd lost interest in the whole thing. He didn't want to hear another word about it. It had nothing to do with him anymore. It wasn't even particularly important. He wanted to write a book.

But one afternoon he heard a tap at his door, and Esther Wilson came in. She'd brought a chocolate cake, and she cut him a large piece. He was surprised by how unchanged she seemed, how cheerful she was. They groaned with pleasure over the cake. She asked him how the pain in his leg was, and how the reviewing was going. He concluded that she had no idea of his involvement in the scandal.

"Walter blames me for ruining his life," she said, "for visiting Kate and saying that her persisting with him was pointless. I left her bereft of hope, he says. He is a difficult man to live with, Ray, I can tell you."

Ray felt she was understating.

"Will you take me to the theater?" she asked.

"Yes."

"On Thursday?"

He wondered how he'd be able to keep his mouth shut about what he'd done, but he pushed the event into a corner of his mind. After the theater he went to visit the prostitute again. She was stoned and it was late—no other clients would come tonight and she was in no hurry for him to leave. She kept calling him a friend. "Now we're friends," she said, and gave him a thin joint without tobacco. He didn't feel like explaining that that wasn't what friendship was. They lay there on a busted mattress in a shabby South London basement with the sound of footsteps just above their heads, and he thought of death and how, while you were still alive, you had to try and love other people in whatever way you could. He thought of Esther. She'd liked him, she'd listened to him, responded to him, loved him. He supposed they would carry on being friends. He knew he wanted that.

He pulled himself up into a sitting position. The woman stirred but continued to lie there, naked, on her back, staring at the ceiling. The bed stank of cigarettes, and she smelled of petunia. □

*Unwilling to argue directly
against reform, opponents of progressive impulses in society
have attempted to show instead that reformist measures will invariably have effects
that are contrary to the ones intended*

REACTIONARY RHETORIC

BY ALBERT O. HIRSCHMAN



IN A FAMOUS 1949 LECTURE ON THE "DEVELOPMENT OF citizenship" in the West, the English sociologist T. H. Marshall distinguished among the civil, political, and social dimensions of citizenship and then proceeded to explain, very much in the spirit of the Whig interpretation of history, how the more enlightened human societies had tackled these three dimensions one after another, conveniently allocating about a century to each. According to his scheme, the eighteenth century witnessed the major battles for the institution of *civil* citizenship, from freedom of speech, thought, and religion to the right to evenhanded justice—in other words, for the "Rights of Man." In the course of the nineteenth century it was the *political* aspect of citizenship—that is, the right of citizens to participate in the exercise of political power—that made major strides, as the right to vote was extended to ever larger groups. Finally, the rise of the welfare state in the twentieth century extended the concept of citizenship to the *social* and *economic* sphere, by recognizing that minimum standards of education, health, economic well-being, and security are basic to the life of a civilized person as well as

to the meaningful exercise of the civil and political attributes of citizenship.

When Marshall painted this magnificent canvas of staged progress, the third battle for the assertion of citizenship rights, the one being waged on social and economic terrain, seemed to be well on its way to being won, particularly in the Labour Party-ruled, social-security-conscious Britain of the immediate postwar period. A generation or so later it appears that, as Ralf Dahrendorf recently reminded us, Marshall was overoptimistic on that score and that the notion of the socioeconomic dimension of citizenship as a natural complement of the civil and political dimensions has run into considerable difficulties and stands in need of substantial rethinking.

Indeed, is it not true that not just the last but each and every one of Marshall's three progressive thrusts has been followed by ideological counterthrusts of extraordinary force? And have not these counterthrusts often led to convulsive social and political struggles, and to setbacks for progressive programs, and to much human suffering and misery? The backlash so far elicited by the welfare state

may in fact be rather mild in comparison with the onslaughts and conflicts that followed upon the assertion of individual freedoms in the eighteenth century and upon the broadening of political participation in the nineteenth. Once we contemplate this protracted and perilous seesawing of action and reaction, we come to appreciate more than ever the profound wisdom of Alfred North Whitehead's well-known observation that "the major advances in civilization are processes which all but wreck the societies in which they occur." It is surely Whitehead's statement, rather than any account of smooth, unrelenting progress, that catches the deeply ambivalent essence of the story Marshall so blandly called the "development of citizenship."

THERE ARE GOOD REASONS, THEN, FOR FOCUSING ON the *reactions* to the successive forward thrusts. It is not my aim here to write yet another essay on the nature and deep roots of conservative thought. Nor am I going to embark on a broad and leisurely historical review of the successive reforms and counterreforms, theses and countertheses, since the French Revolution. Rather, I shall focus on the common or typical arguments unfailingly made by the great reactive movements of the past two centuries. My emphasis will be on the major polemical maneuvers engaged in by those who set out to debunk and roll back "progressive" policies and movements of ideas—by the forces, that is to say, of reaction. Chief among these arguments is what might be called the thesis of the perverse effect.

The thesis of the perverse effect is closely connected with the semantic origin of the term *reaction*. The couple *action* and *reaction* came into currency as a result of Newton's Third Law of Motion, which asserted that "to every Action there is always opposed an equal Reaction." Having thus been singled out for distinction in the prestigious science of mechanics, the two concepts spilled over into other realms and were widely used in the analysis of society and history in the eighteenth century. No derogatory meaning whatsoever attached at first to the term *reaction*. The remarkably durable infusion of such meaning took place during the French Revolution—specifically, after its great watershed, the events of Thermidor. It is already noticeable in Benjamin Constant's youthful tract *Des Réactions politiques*, written in 1797 expressly to denounce what Constant perceived as a new chapter of the Revolution, in which the reactions against the excesses of the Jacobins might themselves engender far worse excesses. This very thought may have contributed to the pejorative meaning that was soon attached to the term. More important, the spirit of the Enlightenment, with its belief in the forward march of history, survived the Revolution, even among its critics, notwithstanding the Terror and other mishaps. One could deplore the excesses of the Revolution, as Constant certainly did, and yet continue to believe both in history's fundamentally progressive design and in the Revolution's

part in it. Such must have been the dominant contemporary attitude. Otherwise it would be hard to explain why those who "reacted" to the Revolution in a predominantly negative manner came to be perceived and denounced as "reactionaries."

The semantic exploration of *reaction* points straight to an important characteristic of reactionary thinking. Because of the stubbornly progressive temper of the modern era, reactionaries live in a hostile world. They are up against an intellectual climate that attaches a positive value to the lofty objectives proclaimed and actively pursued by their adversaries. Given this state of public opinion, reactionaries are not likely to launch an all-out attack on those objectives. Rather, they will endorse them, sincerely or otherwise, but then attempt to demonstrate that the actions undertaken in their name are ill conceived; indeed, they will most typically argue that these actions will produce, by way of a series of unintended consequences, the *exact contrary* of the objectives that are being pursued.

This, then, is the thesis of the perverse effect. It asserts not merely that a movement or policy will fall short of its goal or will occasion unexpected costs or negative side effects but that *the attempt to push society in a certain direction will result in its moving in the opposite direction*. Being simple, intriguing, and devastating (if true), the argument has proved popular with generations of reactionaries as well as with the public at large. It is not, of course, the exclusive property of reactionaries, and it is most generally to be heard among groups that are out of power. In what follows I intend to look at how the argument has been wielded against attempts to expand the civil, political, and social and economic aspects of citizenship.

A Vengeful Providence?

LIKE MANY OTHER ELEMENTS OF REACTIONARY THINKING, the thesis of the perverse effect was first put forward in the wake of the French Revolution. Actually, there was little need for inventive genius: As *liberté, égalité, fraternité* turned into the dictatorship of the Comité de Salut Public (and later into that of Bonaparte), the idea that certain attempts to achieve liberty are bound to lead to tyranny instead almost forced itself upon the mind. Edmund Burke predicted such an outcome as early as 1790, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. There he prognosticated that "an ignoble oligarchy founded on the destruction of the crown, the church, the nobility, and the people [would] end all the deceitful dreams and visions of the equality and rights of men." He conjured up the specter of military interventions during various civil disorders and exclaimed, "Massacre, torture, hanging! These are your rights of men!"

The argument took root and was to be repeated in many forms. Perhaps the most general, if heavy-footed, formulation is that of the German Romantic political economist Adam Müller, who proclaimed, when the Revolution and its Napoleonic aftermath had run their course,

The history of the French Revolution constitutes a proof, administered continuously over thirty years, that man, acting by himself and without religion, is unable to break any chains that oppress him without sinking in the process into still deeper slavery.

Here Burke's conjectures have been turned into a rigid historical law that could serve as an ideological prop for the Europe of the Holy Alliance.

Burke's uncanny ability to project the course of the French Revolution has been attributed to the very strength of his passionate engagement with it. But his formulation of the perverse effect may well have had an intellectual origin as well: he was steeped in the thought of the Scottish Enlightenment, which stressed the importance of the unintended effects of human action. The best-known application of this notion was the "invisible hand" doctrine of Adam Smith, with whose economic views Burke had expressed total agreement.

Smith, like Mandeville and others (such as Pascal and Vico) before him, had shown how individual actions motivated by greed—or, less insultingly, by self-interest—can have a positive social outcome in the shape of an orderly or prosperous commonwealth. Expressing these ideas with poetic pith toward the end of the century, Goethe defined his Mephisto as "a part of that force that ever wills evil, but ever brings forth good."

In this manner the intellectual terrain was well prepared for arguing that on occasion the opposite might happen. This was exactly what Burke did in contemplating the unprecedented effort of the French Revolution to reconstruct society: he switched the places of good and evil in Goethe's statement and asserted that the social outcome of the revolutionaries' striving for the public good would be evil, calamitous, and wholly contrary to the goals and hopes they were professing.

From one point of view, then, Burke's proposition looks (and may have looked to him) like a minor variation on a well-known eighteenth-century theme. From another, it was a radical ideological shift from the Enlightenment to Romanticism and from optimism about progress to pessimism. It seems possible to me that large-scale and seemingly abrupt ideological shifts often take place in this fashion. Formally they require only a slight modification of familiar patterns of thought, but the new variant has an affinity with very different beliefs and propositions and be-

comes *embedded* in them to form a wholly new gestalt, so that in the end the intimate connection between the old and the new is almost unrecognizable.

In the present case, the old was the slow emergence of a new kind of hope for world order. From the sixteenth century on it was widely agreed that religious precept and moral admonition could not be relied on to restrain and reshape human nature so as to guarantee social order and economic welfare. But with the rise of commerce and industry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, influential voices proposed that some of the ineradicable "vices" of men, such as persistent self-seeking, could, properly channeled, produce a workable and perhaps even

a progressive society. To Pascal, Vico, and Goethe, this paradoxical process suggested the intervention of a Providence that is remarkably benign, forgiving, and helpful as it transmutes evil into good. The optimism of this construction was enhanced further when the pursuit of self-interest through trade and industry lost its stigma and was accorded social prestige instead. At that point there was no longer a sharp contrast between the means and the end, or between process and outcome, and the need for the magical intervention of Divine Providence became less compelling: Adam Smith barely allowed it to survive,

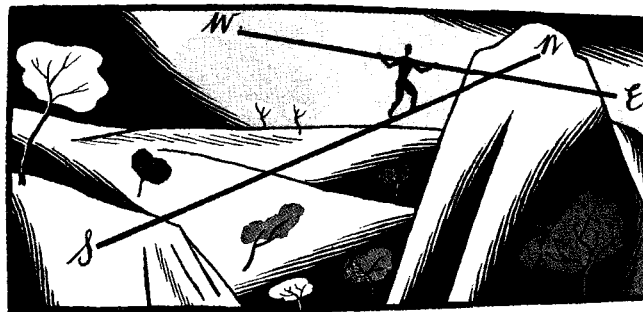
secularized and a bit anemic, as the invisible hand.

The French Revolution caused Divine Providence to be pressed back into active service but in a shape that was anything but benign: its task now was to foil the designs of men, whose pretensions to the building of an ideal society were to be exposed as naive and preposterous, if not criminal and blasphemous. "*Der Mensch in seinem Wahn*" (man in his delusion), that "worst of terrors," as Schiller put it in one of his best-known poems, had to be taught a salutary if severe lesson.

Joseph de Maistre in particular ascribed refined cruelty to the Divine Providence that he saw at work throughout the Revolution. In his *Considérations sur la France* (1797) he came forward with an extravagant formulation of the perverse effect as the very essence of Divine Providence.

The efforts a people make to attain a certain objective are precisely the means employed by Providence to keep it out of reach. . . . If one wants to know the probable result of the French Revolution, one only needs to examine the points on which all factions were in agreement: all wanted the . . . destruction of universal Christianity and

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of the Monarchy; *from which it follows* that the final result of their efforts will be none other than the exaltation of Christianity and Monarchy.

All those who have written or meditated about history have admired this secret force which mocks human intentions.

Maistre's construction of Divine Providence is no doubt exceptional in its elaborate vengefulness. But the basic feature of the perversity thesis has remained unchanged: man is held up to ridicule, by Divine Providence and by those privileged social analysts who have pierced its designs, for setting out to improve the world radically and for going radically astray. What better way to show him up as half foolish and half criminal than to prove that he is achieving the exact opposite of what he is proclaiming as his objective?

The Foolish Majority

THIS LINE OF REASONING SURFACES AGAIN DURING our next episode, the broadening of the franchise in the nineteenth century. New reasons for affirming the inevitability of a perverse outcome of that process were now put forward by the emergent social sciences. To appreciate the climate of opinion in which these arguments arose, it is useful to recall contemporary attitudes toward the masses and toward mass participation in politics.

European society had long been highly stratified, with the lower classes being held in the utmost contempt by both the upper and the middle classes. "The occupation of a hairdresser," Burke wrote, "or of a working tallow-chandler cannot be a matter of honor to any person—to say nothing of a number of other more servile employments. . . . the state suffers oppression if such as they . . . are permitted to rule." He commented on the "innumer-

able servile, degrading, unseemly, unmanly, and often most unwholesome and pestiferous occupations to which by the social economy so many wretches are inevitably doomed."

Such remarks, made in an offhand manner, suggest that Burke's primary emotion toward the "lower orders" was not so much class antagonism and fear of revolt as utter contempt, a feeling of total separateness, even outright physical revulsion, much as in caste societies. This mood carried over into the nineteenth century and could only have been enhanced by the cityward migration of impoverished rural folk which came with industrialization. It was compounded by fear as Burke's "wretches" took to staging violent political outbreaks, particularly in the 1840s. After one such episode, in 1845 in Lucerne, the young Jacob Burckhardt wrote from Basel,

Conditions in Switzerland—so disgusting and barbarous—have spoilt everything for me, and I shall expatriate myself as soon as I can. . . . The word freedom sounds rich and beautiful, but no one should talk about it who has not seen and experienced slavery under the loud-mouthed masses, called 'the people.' . . . I know too much history to expect anything from the despotism of the masses but a future tyranny, which will mean the end of history. . . .

It would be easy to collect additional evidence on the extent to which the idea of mass participation in politics, even in the watered-down form of universal suffrage, seemed aberrant and potentially disastrous to a good part of Europe's elites. Universal suffrage was one of Flaubert's favorite *bêtes noires*, a frequent butt of his passionate hatred of human stupidity. The farther universal suffrage extended its sweep across Europe, the more strident became the elite voices that stood or arose in unreconciled opposition to it. For Nietzsche, popular elections were the ultimate expression of the "herd instinct," a telling term he coined to denigrate all trends toward democratic politics. Even Ibsen, acclaimed in his time as a progressive critic of society, harshly attacked the majority and majority rule. In *An Enemy of the People* (1882) the play's hero, Dr. Stockmann, thunders,

Who forms the majority in any country? I think we'd all have to agree that the fools are in a terrifying, overwhelming majority all over the world! But in the name of God it can't be right that the fools should rule the wise!

The undoubted advance of democratic political forms in the second half of the century occurred despite a diffuse mood of skepticism and hostility. Then, toward the century's end, this mood found a more sophisticated expression, as medical and psychological discoveries showed human behavior to be motivated by irrational forces to a much greater extent than had previously been acknowledged. Among the several political ideas that can be considered to be, in this manner, reactions to the advances of the franchise and of democracy in general, one of the more prominent and influential was articulated by Gustave Le

CROCUSES

They come
by stealth, spreading
the rumour of spring—
near the hedge . . .
by the gate . . .
at our chilly feet . . .
mothers of saffron, fathers
of insurrection, purple
and yellow scouts
of an army still massing
just to the south.

—Linda Pastan

GENERATING MORE THAN ELECTRICITY

By Bob Bergland

I'm an optimist

about people power.

Maybe that's because I see so many people in rural communities—areas often left behind while the rest of the country

prosper—harnessing their can-do spirit to pump new life into their local economy.

In one area of west Texas, for example, the manager of Midwest Electric Co-op in Fisher County and other community leaders simply weren't willing to watch their economy deteriorate and their population dwindle. So they did something about it.

They formed an economic commission, and projects to revive local assets—like restoring historic Main Street storefronts—were put into motion. They brought in new business and provided the professional services needed to support commercial development. Today, with a new livestock processing plant, a business “incubator,” and other signs of growth, parents and youngsters look at their hometown with a whole new vision.

Fisher County's story is not unique. Neither is the leadership provided by the electric co-op

there. In fact, there are 1,000 rural electric systems in 46 states, helping communities cope with challenging conditions. These electric co-ops, owned by the people they serve, provide the leadership and resources needed to strengthen community foundations.

In Alabama, a local co-op has helped build and operate a water system for several thousand people. A sporting goods plant in

South Dakota was saved when a co-op manager found a buyer for the facility. In Vermont, a languishing farming community built a ski village and training center with a co-op's help. Co-ops in Wisconsin formed an organization to rebuild homes and businesses after natural disasters. The list goes on and on.

These are powerful examples of leadership and cooperation in generating local economic growth. And by bringing growth to the rural economy, rural electric systems are generating more than electricity . . . they are strengthening the nation's economic foundation.



Bob Bergland is Executive Vice President of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



**America's Consumer-Owned
Rural Electric Systems**
A Power In The Land.

Bon, in his best-selling *Psychologie des foules*, first published in 1895. The book also exemplified once again the attraction of reactionary thinkers to the perverse effect.

Le Bon's principal argument challenged commonsense understandings by invoking what is known to economists as the fallacy of composition. What applies to the individual, he insisted, does not necessarily hold for the group, much less for the crowd. Impressed by recent research findings on infection and hypnosis (but unaware of the simultaneously proceeding work of Freud, which would shortly show individuals themselves to be subject to all manner of unconscious drives), Le Bon drew a sharp dichotomy between the individual and the crowd: the individual was rational, perhaps sophisticated, and calculating; the crowd was irrational, easily swayed, unable to weigh pros and cons, given to unreasoning enthusiasms, and so on: "None too good at reasoning, the crowd is on the contrary much given to action."

In *fin de siècle* Europe, Le Bon's theory had obvious political implications. It saw the prospects for national and international order as quite gloomy: with the franchise spreading, Le Bon's irrational crowds were installed as important actors in an ever larger number of countries. Moreover, the book's last two chapters, "Electoral Crowds" and "Parliamentary Assemblies," supplied specific arguments against modern mass-based democracy. Here Le Bon did not argue directly against universal suffrage; rather, like Flaubert, he spoke of it as an absurd dogma that was unfortunately bound to cause a great deal of harm just as had earlier, superstitious beliefs. The perverse effect is invoked in the final, crowning argument of the book: democracy will increasingly turn into the rule of bureaucracy through the many laws and regulations passed in "the illusion that equality and liberty will be better safeguarded thereby." In support of these views Le Bon cited Herbert Spencer's book *The Man versus the State* (1884). Spencer was a contemporary scientific authority who had taken a strongly conservative turn. Spencer, too, had chosen the perverse effect as a leitmotif, particularly in the essay titled "The Sins of Legislators," where he put forward an extravagantly general formulation: "Uninstructed legislators have in past times continually increased human suffering in their endeavours to mitigate it."

Once again, then, a group of social analysts derided those who aspired to change the world for the better. And

it was not enough for them to show that these naive do-gooders fell flat on their face; they sought to prove that the do-gooders' efforts actually left the world in worse shape. Moreover, they insisted that the worsening occurred along the very dimension where improvement had been intended.

"The Arch-Creator of Distress"

THE THESIS OF THE PERVERSE EFFECT WAS TO achieve special prominence during the third reactionary phase, to which I now turn: the present-day assault on the social and economic policies that make up the modern welfare state.

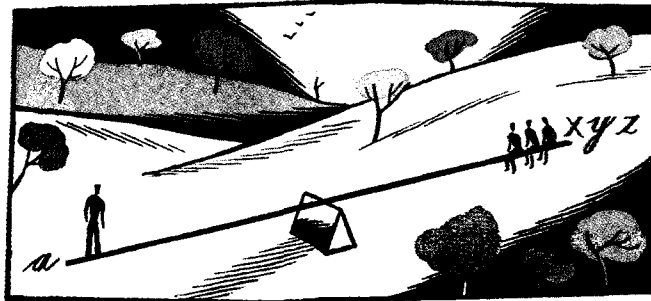
In economics, more than in the other social and political sciences, the perverse-effect theory is closely tied to a central tenet of the discipline: the idea of a self-regulating market. To the extent that this idea is dominant, any public policy aimed at changing market outcomes, such as prices or wages, automatically becomes noxious interference with beneficent equilibrating processes. Even economists who favor some measures of income and wealth redistribution tend to regard the most obvious "populist" price- or wage-policy measures as counterproductive.

The perverse effect of specific interferences—a decree setting a maximum price for bread, or a minimum-wage law—has often been argued by tracing the supply-and-demand reactions to such measures. For example, as a result of a price ceiling for bread, flour will be diverted to other uses and some bread will be sold at black-market prices, so that the average price of bread may go up rather than down. Similarly, after a minimum wage is imposed, less labor will be hired, so that the income of workers may fall rather than rise.

There is actually nothing certain about such perverse effects. In the case of minimum-wage legislation, in particular, it is conceivable that the underlying supply-and-demand curves for labor could shift as a result and that the officially imposed increase in wages could have a positive effect on labor productivity and consequently on employment. But the mere possibility of demonstrating a perverse outcome as the first-order effect of interference makes for a powerful debating point that is bound to be brought up in any polemic.

The long public debate about social assistance to the

**LE BON BASED HIS THEORY ON
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poor provides ample illustration. Such assistance is admittedly rank interference with “market outcomes” that assign some members of society to the bottom of the income scale. The economic argument that perverse effects will ensue was first put forward during debates about the poor laws in England. The critics of these laws, from Defoe to Burke, from Malthus to Tocqueville, scoffed at the notion that the poor laws were merely a “safety net”—to use a modern term—for those who had fallen behind, through no fault of their own, in the race to earn a livelihood. Given the human “proclivity to idleness” (Mandeville’s phrase), this “naïve” view neglected the supply reactions, the incentives built into the arrangement: the availability of the assistance, it was argued, acted as a positive encouragement to “sloth” and “depravity,” and thus *produced* poverty instead of relieving it. Here is a typical formulation of this point, by an early-nineteenth-century English essayist:

The Poor-laws were intended to prevent mendicants; they have made mendicancy a legal profession; they were established in the spirit of a noble and sublime provision, which contained all the theory of Virtue; they have produced all the consequences of Vice. . . . The Poor-laws, formed to relieve the distressed, have been the arch-creator of distress.

A century and a half later, in the most highly publicized attack on the welfare state in the United States, Charles Murray’s *Losing Ground* (1984), one reads:

We tried to provide more for the poor and produced more poor instead. We tried to remove the barriers to escape from poverty, and inadvertently built a trap.

Except for a slight toning down of nineteenth-century coloratura, the music is exactly the same. The perverse effect would seem to work unrelentingly under both early and late capitalism.

Not that the ideological scene has remained unchanged throughout these hundred and fifty years. The success of Murray’s book in fact owes much to the rather fresh look of its principal point, epitomized in its title—almost any idea that has been out of view for a long time has a good chance of being mistaken for an original insight. What actually happened is that the idea went into hiding, for reasons that are of some interest to our story.

As Karl Polanyi showed memorably in *The Great Transformation* (1944), the English poor laws, especially as supplemented and reinforced by the Speenhamland Act of 1795, represented a last-ditch attempt to rein in, through public assistance, the free market for labor, and to ameliorate its effects on the poorest strata of society. By supplementing low wages, particularly in agriculture, the new scheme helped to ensure social peace and to sustain domestic food production during the age of the Napoleonic Wars.

But once the emergency was over, the scheme came under strong attack. Fueled by belief in the new political-economy “laws” of Bentham, Malthus, and Ricardo, the

reaction against the Speenhamland arrangements became so powerful that in 1834 the Poor Law Amendment Act (or “New Poor Law”) fashioned the workhouse into the primary instrument of social assistance. Workhouse assistance was now organized so as to do away once and for all with any conceivable perverse effect. What public assistance there was stigmatized those who used it by (in the words of a contemporary observer)

imprisoning [them] in workhouses, compelling them to wear special garb, separating them from their families, cutting them off from communication with the poor outside, and, when they died, permitting their bodies to be disposed of for dissection.

It was not long before this new regime aroused, in turn, the most violent criticism across a wide political and social spectrum. A particularly powerful and influential indictment was Charles Dickens’s novel *Oliver Twist*, published in 1837–1838. A strong opposition movement arose, complete with demonstrations and riots, during the decade following enactment, and as a result the provisions of the law were not fully applied. The experience with the New Poor Law was so searing that the argument that had presided over its adoption—essentially, a claim that social-welfare assistance had a perverse effect—remained discredited for a long time.

Eventually the argument reappeared, however, though not at first in its crude form. Rather, it would seem that to be reintroduced into polite company, the old-fashioned perverse effect needed some new, sophisticated attire. One of the early general attacks on social-welfare policy in this country, which had the intriguing title “Counter-intuitive Behavior of Social Systems,” was published in 1971 by Jay W. Forrester, a pioneer in the simulation of social processes with computer models. The article is a good example of what the French call intellectual terrorism. At the outset the reader is told that he or she has a very poor chance of understanding how society works, since we are dealing with “complex and highly interacting systems,” with social arrangements that “belong to the class called multi-loop non-linear feedback systems” and similar arcane “system dynamics” that “the human mind is not adapted to interpreting.” Only the highly trained computer specialist can unravel these mysteries—and what revelations does he come up with? “At times programs cause exactly the reverse of desired results.” Joseph de Maistre’s vengeful Providence has returned in the guise of “multi-loop non-linear feedback systems.”

In an influential article also written in 1971, titled “The Limits of Social Policy,” Nathan Glazer joined Forrester in invoking the perverse effect, proclaiming, “Our efforts to deal with distress themselves increase distress.” Glazer did not employ computer models but spelled out some plain sociological reasons. Welfare-state policies, he argued, are meant to deal with distress that used to be dealt with by traditional structures such as the family, the church, and the local community. As these structures

break down, the state comes in to take over their functions. In the process, the state further weakens what remains of the traditional structures. Hence the situation gets worse rather than better.

But Glazer's reasoning was too softly sociological for the harder, conservative mood that became fashionable during the 1980s. Charles Murray's formulation of the perverse effect of social-welfare policy returned to the blunt reasoning of the proponents of poor-law reform in early-nineteenth-century England. Inspired, like them, by the simplest economic verities, he argued that public assistance to the poor, as available in the United States, acts as an irresistible incentive to those working or potentially working for low wages (his famous "Harold" and "Phyllis") to flock to the welfare rolls and to stay there—to become forever "trapped" in sloth and poverty.

Does Everything Backfire?

JUST AS EARLIER I HAVE NOT CONTROVERTED BURKE OR Le Bon, it is not my purpose here to discuss the substance of the various arguments against social-welfare policy in the United States and elsewhere. What I have tried to show is that the protagonists of this reactionary episode, like those of the earlier ones, have been powerfully attracted time and again by the same form of reasoning—that is, the claim of the perverse effect. In closing, I nevertheless wish to give some quite general reasons why the perverse effect is unlikely to exist in nature to anything like the extent that is claimed.

One of the great insights of the science of society—found already in Vico and Mandeville and elaborated masterfully during the Scottish Enlightenment—is that because of imperfect foresight, human actions are apt to have unintended consequences of considerable scope. The perverse effect is a special and extreme case of the unintended consequence. Here the failure of foresight of the ordinary human actors is well-nigh total, because their actions are shown to produce precisely the opposite of the result intended; the social scientists analyzing the perverse effect, however, experience a great feeling of superiority—and revel in it. Maistre naively said as much when he exclaimed in his gruesome chapter on the prevalence of war in human history: "It is sweet to fathom the design of the Godhead in the midst of general cataclysm."

But the self-flattery of this situation should put the analysts of the perverse effect, as well as the rest of us, on guard: could they be embracing the effect for the express purpose of feeling good about themselves? In any event, are they not suffering from an attack of hubris when they portray ordinary human beings as wholly groping in the dark, while in contrast they make themselves look so remarkably perspicacious? And, finally, are they not rendering their task too easy by focusing on just one privileged

and simplistic outcome of a program or a policy—the opposite of the intended one? For it can be argued that the perverse effect, which appears to be a mere variant of the concept of unintended consequences, is in one important respect its denial and even its betrayal. The concept of unintended consequences originally introduced uncertainty and open-endedness into social thought, but the exponents of the perverse effect retreat into viewing the social universe as wholly predictable by means of a rather transparent maneuver.

There is no denying, to be sure, that the perverse effect does show up here and there. By intimating that it is likely to be invoked for reasons that have little to do with its relevance, I have merely intended to raise some doubts about whether it occurs with the frequency that is claimed. Indeed, the perverse effect is by no means the only conceivable variety of unintended consequences or side effects.

In the first place, as Adam Smith and Goethe tried to teach us, there are unintended consequences and side effects of human actions that are *welcome*. But we rarely pay much attention to them, because they do not pose urgent problems to be addressed. Second, there are actions, policies, and inventions that have no unintended consequences, welcome or otherwise. These situations, similarly, tend to be neglected entirely. Finally, there are situations where secondary or side effects detract from the intended effect of some purposeful action. Here we are getting closer to the perverse case. But typically some positive benefit survives the onslaught of the negative side effect. There is, in fact, something intrinsically plausible about this type of outcome and something correspondingly implausible about the perverse effect as a frequent occurrence. This is so at least to the extent that policy-making is a repetitive, incremental activity: yesterday's experiences are continually incorporated into today's decisions, so that tendencies toward perversity stand a good chance of being detected and corrected.

I HOPE I WILL HAVE CONVINCED THE READER THAT IT was worthwhile to trace the thesis of the perverse effect through the debates of the past two hundred years, if only to marvel at certain constants in argument and rhetoric—just as Flaubert liked to marvel at the constant *bêtise* of his contemporaries. To see how the participants in these debates lumber predictably through their paces may even have some practical value. On the one hand, it may incline advocates of reactionary causes to plead their case with greater originality, sophistication, and restraint. And on the other hand, it may help reformers and sundry progressives: they are here given notice of the kinds of arguments and objections that are most likely to be raised against their programs. □



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

OSCAR WILDE AND WALT WHITMAN

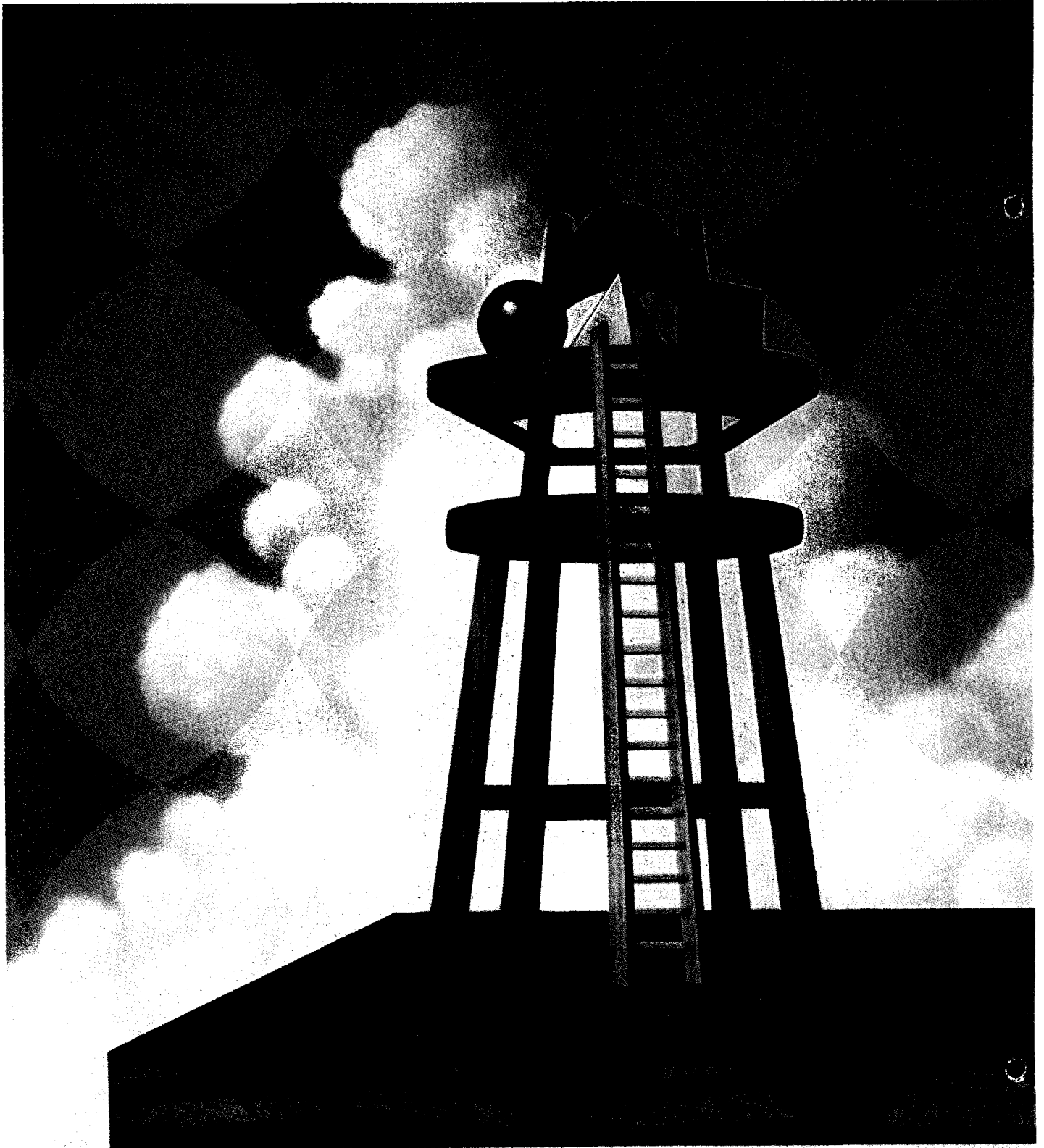
WRAPPED IN HIS fur-trimmed green greatcoat, the young poet Oscar Wilde arrived in America for a lecture tour in January of 1882. He came as the exponent of aestheticism to a puritanical and often hostile people. But cosmopolitan New York lionized him, and the press loved him: his flamboyance was good copy. In Philadelphia, his second stop, he mentioned that he did "so hope to meet Mr. Whitman." A card promptly arrived: "Walt Whitman will be in from 2 till 3½ this afternoon."

Whitman lived very simply in nearby Camden with his brother and sister-in-law. Like Wilde, he was tall and solidly built, but his rough homespun suit and open shirt were in sharp contrast to his visitor's sartorial elegance. "I come as a poet to call upon a poet," Wilde intoned in greeting. He then described how his mother had read *Leaves of Grass* aloud to him as a child. Pleased, Whitman produced a bottle of his sister-in-law's elderberry wine and invited his guest to help consume it. "I will call you Oscar," he said.

The bottle emptied, they adjourned to the den—to be on "thee and thou terms," as Whitman put it. Wilde asked about his theory of composition. He had once been a typesetter, Whitman explained, and aimed at making his verse "look all neat and pretty on the pages, like the epitaph on a square tombstone." But to advocate beauty and charm over substance, as in Wilde's aestheticism—that was going too far. "Why, Oscar," Whitman objected, "it always seems to me that the fellow who makes a dead set at beauty by itself is in a bad way."

To Whitman, however, Wilde was never such a fellow. With him Wilde had dropped his affectations and found no occasion for his famed barbed wit; his Oscar was always "a fine large handsome youngster." As for Wilde, he remembered the afternoon in terms of fresh air and sunlight, and when a friend, knowing his tastes, remarked that the elderberry wine must have been difficult to get down, he replied, "If it had been vinegar, I should have drunk it all the same."

—Nancy Caldwell Sorel



RUDNAK



*Bright, well-educated
American women of all races are
having fewer children, a phenomenon the
author believes may affect national
productivity and the gene pool*

IQ AND FALLING BIRTH RATES

BY R. J. HERRNSTEIN

A GREAT MANY PEOPLE ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT HAVING children. I hear about this concern frequently from young men and women passing through Harvard—more than ever before in my three and a half decades here. And I hear about it in conversations with my peers, frustrated by the slow accumulation of grandchildren. This concern is at least mildly ironic, coming, as it does, two decades after alarms about a “population explosion.”

Though populations in South America and Africa and the Indian subcontinent continue to grow at an alarming rate, the U.S. media direct their attention increasingly to labor shortages in industrial societies and to shrinking school populations in affluent American suburbs. Thinking people have heard, and are talking, about the “birth dearth,” as Ben Wattenberg named it in the title of a recent book. Day-care and parental benefits, which will presumably increase the birth rate, earn approving mention in the platforms of both political parties and in glossy annual reports of large companies.

The concern about fertility also bubbles to the surface in artistic renderings of contemporary and future life—in light movies like *Baby Boom* and *Three Men and a Baby*, for example, about young women or men trying to reconcile careers and parenthood, and in serious novels, like Margaret Atwood’s *Handmaid’s Tale*, with its fantasy of a not-too-distant future in which the dwindling number of fertile women are made slaves to procreation.

Low fertility, of course, is hardly a new worry. Some of its history, especially that in Europe since the middle of the nineteenth century, is well and compactly told by Michael Teitelbaum and Jay Winter in their book *The Fear of Population Decline*. Some French writers attributed the defeat of their nation in the Franco-Prussian War, in 1871, to the slow French rate of reproduction, as compared with that of fecund Germany. Fertility became a central issue

in early-twentieth-century French politics. Besides being blamed for France's inability to field an army large enough to defeat the Germans and also have a functioning economy at home, low fertility was seen by various contemporary French commentators as the cause or the effect of "national degeneracy," a disease of the French spirit.

Fiction echoed reality, as it does everywhere. In Emile Zola's novel *Fecondité*, written at the turn of the century, happiness and personal triumph came to a working-class couple with fifteen children and scores of grandchildren, rather than to various unappealing bourgeois, with their selfishly hedonistic but ultimately miserable lives, their Malthusian rhetoric bemoaning fecundity, and, above all, their small families. Zola was one of the founding members of the National Alliance for the Growth of the French Population.

In Great Britain, too, arguments about reproduction were part of the political landscape before and after the turn of the century. As in France, a disastrous and costly war heightened public alarm. But the British had been outfought in southern Africa, rather than outnumbered, by the Boers, even though the British eventually won the war. Considerations of the losses of the Boer War emphasized not so much the question of *how many* British soldiers but of *how good* they were. If the French worry about fertility was characterized as mainly quantitative, the British worry was mainly qualitative.

The worries went beyond the quantity and quality of armies. Teitelbaum and Winter describe a British preoccupation with the general "physical deterioration" of the population; with what was called the residuum, meaning urban unskilled workers; and with the "proliferation of the unfit" versus the underreproduction of the fit. Prime Minister Arthur Balfour worried publicly in 1905 that the very members of the working class who showed the enterprise and ability to improve their lot were the ones who limited their own fertility, while those who did not get ahead bred beyond their capacity for taking good care of their children. "Everything done towards opening up careers to the lower classes did something towards the degeneration of the race," he said.

In our time, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, of Singapore, has said, "Levels of competence will decline, our economy will falter, our administration will suffer, and society will decline" because so many educated men are failing to find educated women to marry and are instead marrying uneducated women or remaining unmarried. But Lee is an exception, for few modern political leaders dare to talk in public about the qualitative aspect of low fertility. We know why this is, and it has less to do with whether or not we have a fertility problem than with the unacceptability of talking about the subject. In our century the Nazis made selective fertility an emblem of National Socialism, with malevolent consequences that need no review here. Hence even to mention fertility in relation to nation or race has become taboo.

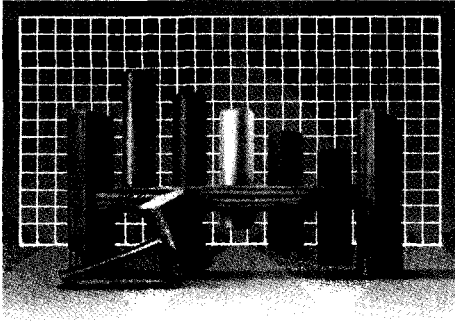
Nonetheless, human fertility, particularly in its qualitative aspect, has a special and direct relation to economic productivity. A full study of fertility and productivity would, of course, cross many frontiers of scholarship, but my focus is narrower. My subject is differences among groups within the population: how these differences affect fertility and how that, in the long run, may affect the society's economic well-being. Partly because of our ghastly memories of the Nazis, many social theorists and scientists have for some time been reluctant to take such differences into account. Society, these social scientists say, must be studied at the level of broad social forces, not at the level of small subpopulations. But however useful and illuminating the abstractions of social theory are, the actual life of a society must consist of myriad individual human actions. In the present instance the social consequences of reproduction are illuminated by the study of individual differences, and the light it sheds spreads further than many realize.

Population

IN PREINDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES PEOPLE TYPICALLY DIE and have babies at high rates, the difference between the two rates determining the direction and size of population growth (if we set aside complications like migration and age at reproduction). With the advent of industrialization, mortality rates fall. Since birth rates remain high, the first consequence of industrialization is a rise in population. This is what alarmed Thomas Malthus, who wrote at the end of the eighteenth century to warn of the tendency of populations to expand to the point of marginal subsistence.

Malthus could not have known that in the next stage of this process of demographic transition, as it is known among demographers, the birth rate falls, largely or totally compensating for the fall in mortality rates. The average number of live births per American woman, for example, fell from about eight in the 1700s to about two in the 1970s. The timing and size of the two components of the demographic transition—the fall in death rates and the fall in birth rates—may vary from nation to nation, but the transition itself is as close to a demographic universal as social science has discovered.

This purely quantitative aspect of the transition is quite well known, unlike the qualitative aspect, which may in the long run be no less significant socially. Robert Retherford, of the East-West Population Institute, in Honolulu, has examined dozens of empirical studies, from many countries, of the demographic transition in relation to social status. The evidence shows that prior to the transition women of high status had higher fertility than those of low status. Among the possible reasons for this: high-status women usually enjoyed better health, they married earlier, because their spouses could afford to start families earlier in life, and they endured fewer and shorter separations from their spouses than low-status women did.



FEW POLITICIANS DARE to bring up the qualitative aspect of low fertility. We know why this is, and it has less to do with whether we have a fertility problem than with the unacceptability of talking about it.

After the transition the overall birth rate is lower, but now women of high status usually have lower fertility than those of low status. Health and marital separation cease to be major factors in fertility, and because of the educational opportunities open to women of high status or high intelligence, their age at marriage rises above that for women who, for whatever reason, lack those opportunities. More-subtle changes, involving the social relation between men and women, may further depress fertility, especially at the upper end of the social and intellectual range.

With only rare exceptions, according to the evidence that Retherford has assembled, the fall in fertility during the transition is thus not just a fall but also a redistribution. At first glance the demographic transition seems biologically perverse. Why do people limit their fertility just when improved conditions of life—as reflected in the reduced mortality rate—might allow them to raise more children successfully? And why should more limitation of fertility take place at high social-status levels than at low? Theorists have several hypotheses.

Economic theorists have noted a simple economic fact about industrialization, one that may influence people's decisions about family size. Economic resources flow from children to parents before industrialization, and vice versa afterward. Another pair of hands on the farm is transformed, after the demographic transition, into another mouth to feed or another tuition to pay. Industrialization and modernization may tip the economic balance toward small families, and do so at higher social-status levels more than at lower, if people calculate consequences at all rationally, as economists usually assume they do.

Theorists with a more biological orientation have suggested that after industrialization people may focus more on the quality of offspring than on the quantity. A few well-nurtured children may have been, at some point in our evolutionary history, a better long-term strategy for the survival of parental genes than many children at the brink of extinction. This means that those who have fewer children may, theoretically, have more grandchildren who reach reproductive age. Biologists theorize that from the evolutionary pressures of such an era, if it existed, we may have inherited behavioral dispositions that favor lower birth rates as conditions improve on the average—as they do in the transition to an industrialized society for those

who succeed in that society. Whether or not the reduced birth rate after industrialization is justified rationally is beside the point as far as this theory is concerned, for the inherited traits of an era arise from the selective processes of an earlier era.

Another biological approach to the demographic transition looks at the differing pressures of parenthood on women and men. Females and males inevitably have different investments in offspring. Mothering is more depleting than fathering. For example, the number of ova per woman is quite limited, compared with the virtually unlimited number of sperm per man. A woman can have little more than one pregnancy a year; a man has no such limitation on his reproductive rate. Each of a woman's children represents a greater fraction of her reproductive potential than does each of a man's. Because she invests more in each child, she is more vulnerable biologically, and perhaps psychologically, to anything that threatens an offspring. Because of this special vulnerability, the customary sexual division of labor—whether or not its origins are inherited—places on mothers a disproportionate share of the burdens of child-rearing.

One difference between human beings and their close biological relatives is that human intelligence has made salient the different stakes that women and men have in parenthood. As human intelligence evolved, women came to understand more clearly than their simian ancestors the risks, pains, and obligations of motherhood, and how these contrasted with the consequences of fatherhood. Women should therefore have come to prefer smaller numbers of children, and they have. They may want the first child or two as much as or more than their spouses do, but in the aggregate women in most societies who express a preference for a particular family size prefer small families, and in few societies do they prefer large ones. Further, women who express a preference—suggesting that they feel they have a say in family size—tend to have fewer children than those who, fatalistically, do not express any preference at all.

No species can survive in the long run, however, if its female fertility falls below what demographers call the replacement rate: the number of children an average woman must have in order to maintain a constant number of women from generation to generation. Since our species continues to flourish, the tendency toward childlessness

must, therefore, have been counteracted by evolution and by culture, during the hundreds of thousands of years since the dawning of human intelligence.

One theory defended by a number of contemporary researchers holds that birth rates drop when a society modernizes if one of the corollary effects is to free women to any extent from the cultural pressures forcing them toward motherhood or keeping them subservient to men. If, for example, they become less dependent on or less threatened by men, and more free to choose a style of life, they will, if the theory is right, choose fewer children. They can just say no.

Inexpensive contraception should hasten the decrease in fertility as women are liberated, by separating the rewards of sexual activity from the costs of parenthood. Contemporary women may choose sex and reject motherhood, an option unavailable to women sexually oppressed and without access to birth control. The calls for the right to abortion come largely from these contemporary women.

This theory implies a differential fall in fertility within a society. The number of offspring may decrease most among more-intelligent women, since they are most aware of the costs of motherhood, all of which are deferred from the moment of fertilization. Sex comes first, the pains and costs of pregnancy and motherhood later. Much research suggests that the less intelligent people are, the less they are likely, on the average, to be influenced by the delayed consequences of their behavior. Women from the higher social strata—and more-intelligent women—are also likely to have fewer children because they are more likely to find rewarding occupations other than, and competing with, motherhood. Societies that manage to keep women subjugated while industrializing should, according to this theory, avoid or reduce the qualitative effect of the demographic transition. Their women—especially their advantaged women—should have more children relative to the historical norms of their society than comparable women in other industrialized societies.

While all these theories about the falling birth rates of the demographic transition are probably right to some extent, the exceptions to the general pattern are well explained by taking sex-role differences into account. The relevance of women's rights to the demographic transition is exemplified by the experience of Japan. Daniel Vining, a demographer, has summarized the evidence showing that educated, upper-class Japanese women did not bear fewer children than women lower on the social ladder as their country grew industrially after the Second World War, and they also did not enjoy as much cultural and economic liberation as did women in modern societies elsewhere. Japan seems to have passed through the quantitative aspect of the transition without experiencing much of the qualitative, reducing fertility rates more or less uniformly all along the social scale. In the Muslim nations as well, childbearing has not shifted disproportionately to women of lower strata, and in that culture, too, women have by Western standards remained oppressed.

WE MIGHT BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE REDISTRIBUTION of childbearing toward lower social strata for many reasons, among them the correlation between social status and socially important traits. Intelligence, as measured by intelligence tests, is one such trait. Because parents and children tend to have comparable levels of measurable intelligence, the average intelligence of the population will decline across generations to the extent that reproduction shifts toward the lower end of the scale (assuming no other influence on the average level). This decline does not depend only on the genetic factor in intelligence, even though most contemporary researchers say that the genetic factor is large. Differential reproduction shifts a population toward the characteristics of the more prolific parents for all traits in which parents and children resemble each other, for whatever reason.

Are brighter women, in fact, having fewer children than less bright women in the United States? Except for the time of the (atypical) Baby Boom, fertility and tested intelligence have been negatively related in several national samples of Americans. The best, albeit still tentative, estimates imply about a one-point drop per generation over the population as a whole, other things being equal. The decline would be larger in the black population than in the white, because black women show a steeper fertility differential in relation to IQ. Using historical estimates of overall American birth rates, Vining tentatively infers the equivalent of a four-to-five-point drop in IQ over the five or six generations spanning the demographic transition in the United States, with only the Baby Boom generation's IQ not dropping. This may not seem like much, but the drop is large if we consider the "tails" of the distribution of intelligence and not just its average. For example, a five-point drop in the average, if the distribution of scores has the "normal" (that is, the familiar bell-curve) shape, would result in almost a 60 percent reduction in the fraction of the population with IQ scores over 130 and a comparable increase in the fraction with IQ scores below 70. It may be the tails of the distribution, more than the average, that we should be worrying about.

The Japanese population has a higher average IQ than the American. In public discussion this IQ differential is usually attributed to the superiority of Japanese schools, but the difference is already present in the earliest years of primary school, and has grown in recent generations. The superior IQ scores of the Japanese population may be to some extent yet another consequence of the demographic transition, which, as noted above, has had less of a differential effect within Japan than it has had here.

Productivity

AN IQ POINT OR TWO ON THE AVERAGE SEEMS A SMALL price to pay for the other consequences of modernization, especially the liberation of women. So why should we care if the intelligence of our population is shifting downward? Can we not compensate in our schools for

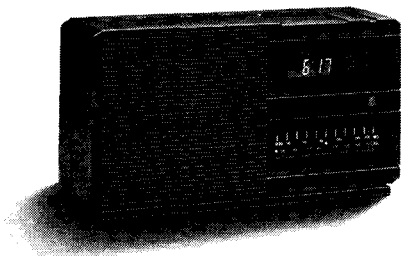
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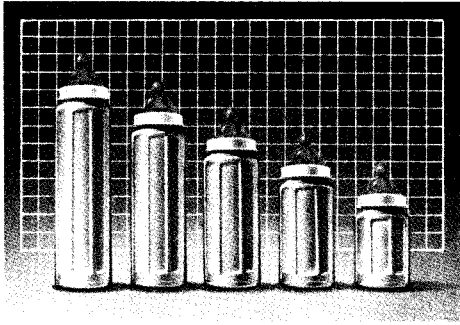
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AN IQ POINT or two seems a small price to pay for the consequences of modernization, especially the liberation of women. So why should we care if the intelligence of our population is shifting downward?

whatever small cost we are paying in lost intellectual ability? That is certainly a possibility, but most people who express that hopeful notion underestimate the cost we pay, economically and perhaps otherwise as well, for lost IQ points.

As a rule of thumb, more-educated people in a modern society are more intelligent, as measured by standard tests, and vice versa—chiefly because societies usually invest educational resources in the people who make the best use of them, and that usually means the people with the high scores. Whether or not one approves of it, education and intelligence are thus correlated—but they are not identical. They can be pulled apart, at least a bit, as a matter of public policy. During the Cultural Revolution in China a centuries-old Chinese tradition of educational selection by objective tests was for a time abandoned. Closer to home, judges and legislatures in this country have been regulating or banning the use of objective tests for school placement and university admissions.

Occupational success in modern societies is linked to education. For decades study after study has shown that people who do well in school are more likely also to do well socioeconomically. Therefore, one line of reasoning goes, the key to productivity and individual achievement is education—rather than individual traits that predict educational success.

If that reasoning were sound, we would be in increasingly excellent shape, compared with the rest of the world. The United States has decisively left the competition behind in sending its population to school. From 1900 to the present the proportion of the American population completing high school rose from 10 percent to over 70 percent. In the 1970s about half of all high school graduates went to college. In the Soviet Union, in contrast, about 10 percent of all high school graduates (who are a smaller fraction of the population to begin with than are graduates in the United States) went on to the next level of education. Western European countries and Japan also fall short of the American standard, graduating fewer than 70 percent (in Italy, the Netherlands, and West Germany the number is fewer than 20 percent) of their high school students, and admitting far fewer of those graduates to college. Similarly, American schoolteachers have, on the average, more years of post-secondary education than teachers anywhere else.

Sending more people to school has no doubt produced benefits in the quality of American life, but instead of an educated populace, we find widespread illiteracy and its mathematical equivalent, innumeracy. Many Americans are going to school more but, apparently, learning less. Schools are being criticized for their lack of rigor, for failing to instill a love of learning; society as a whole is criticized for underpaying and underappreciating teachers. These criticisms may in time lead to improvement. For the present, however, the fact is that the expansion of schooling has not done the job we expected it to do, and its disappointments are evident not just in the classroom. While America has been sending more people to school, it has also been losing ground in the growth of worker productivity, compared with nations having less-schooled populations, such as Japan and West Germany. We now know, to our regret, that something more fundamental than schooling per se explains the historical role of education as a ladder to economic success.

Thanks to a remarkable series of studies by applied psychologists, especially John Hunter, Frank Schmidt, and their associates, we know quite a lot about the predictors of individual occupational success in the United States. Overturning the conventional wisdom of several generations of experts, their analyses prove that variations in intelligence, as measured by IQ and IQ-like tests (such as the U.S. Employment Service's General Abilities Test Battery), predict job productivity to an extraordinary degree.

Because job performance is correlated with intelligence, we now know not only that the productivity of the American work force as a whole, and within particular occupations in given locations, can be improved by the use of intelligence tests for job placement, but also how much improvement is possible. For example, one analysis estimated that Philadelphia would lose \$170 million in productivity over a ten-year period by not using an intelligence test when hiring recruits for the police department. Losses that are larger per person hired would be incurred by failing to test applicants for jobs demanding greater cognitive complexity, such as computer programming. For the American work force as a whole, after taking into account the number of people at all levels of intelligence, the productivity differential between a labor force selected by intelligence tests and one selected at random from ap-

plicant pools was estimated to be worth a minimum of \$80 billion in 1980—about the size of the total annual corporate profit for the Fortune 500 in that year.

When these new analytic methods are applied to thousands of separate studies of worker performance in relation to intelligence, certain broad generalizations follow. Intelligence tests predict performance (as measured by on-the-job trainability, objective measures of job proficiency, or supervisor ratings) in hundreds of common occupations. Performance in a job requiring greater cognitive complexity, such as the job of manager, is more strongly associated with intelligence than performance in one requiring less, such as that of sales clerk. But even for a job at the lowest level of cognitive complexity, such as off-loading conveyor belts, intelligence has predictive power.

The predictive validity of intelligence-test scores, expressed as a correlation coefficient between the score and some measure of job performance, seems to vary from about 0.2 to about 0.6 for individual occupations, and to average about 0.5 for the work force as a whole. If this finding holds up, it is an astonishing result. It says that on the average about 25 percent of the variation in worker productivity can be accounted for by the scores on intelligence tests that can be administered in an hour or so.

Performance in occupations demanding little cognitive complexity is usually best predicted by scores on tests of psychomotor skills (eye-hand coordination, simple reaction time, and so forth), rather than on tests of intellectual ability. Therefore the use, for hiring and promotion, of some combination of intelligence and psychomotor scores, suitably weighted for particular occupations, would predict job productivity even better than the use of either or, obviously, the use of neither, which seems to be a fond hope of advocates of various causes.

One study compared intelligence-test scores with ten other plausible predictors of productivity (job tryout, biographical inventory, reference check, experience, interview, training and experience ratings, academic achievement, education, interest, and age) of entry-level employees in a variety of occupations. All the variables except age had some predictive validity, but intelligence scores, with a validity coefficient of 0.53, had the most. Near the bottom, with coefficients of 0.11 and 0.10, were academic achievement and education, respectively. For employees already on a job, intelligence scores predicted performance after promotion as well as, or better than, measures based on past performance.

Educational level may be a better predictor than intelligence of occupational *attainment* in the United States, as many studies have shown, but for occupational *performance*, intelligence is the better predictor by far. Employers may use educational credentials to hire or promote their employees because they do not understand the power of, do not have available, or are simply reluctant to use measures of intelligence. But the failure to use intelligence measures seems costly in terms of productivity. The

evidence also shows that the distribution of intelligence matters in its own right, and not just in relation to the effect of intelligence on success in school.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS? FIRST, AT THIS POINT in our history merely sending more people to school for more years seems to offer little benefit to economic performance, although doing so may be worthwhile for other reasons. At one time schooling was largely reserved for socioeconomically privileged people. Opening the schools to the rest of the population harvested a vast benefit, intellectually and economically, but we seem to have passed the point at which a large economic gain can be made by merely increasing access to schooling.

The data suggest, however, that schools could be improved so as to develop the very intellectual skills that are so predictive of productivity, and perhaps to further other social purposes. Even the most confirmed believer in the genetic factor in intelligence knows that the environment contributes significantly. Most such believers would probably also agree that schools can play a major role in developing intelligence. For schools to do so would take new knowledge about cognitive development and a redirection of how they go about their business. What is needed, in short, is more support for research on intellectual variation and development, and less political restraint on engaging in it and then applying its findings.

Second, we should be conscious of how public policy interacts not just with education but also with other influences on the intellectual quality of the population, such as the differential in the fertility rates of women of different intelligence. Many things may be done short of the horrors of *The Handmaid's Tale*. Nothing is more private than the decision to bear children, yet society has a vital interest in the aggregate effects of those decisions. This issue demands informed public consideration, and probably also public action to lessen the tension between parenthood and career. At the very least, we should stop telling bright young women that they make poor use of their lives by bearing and raising children, as commencement speakers and others have implied to educated women for decades.

The competing ideals of equality and efficiency create a dilemma of long standing. For various reasons, the dilemma is keenly felt in America. The goal of efficient production competes with the goal of a more equal distribution of wealth. We can, we believe, gain greater equality with little or no cost in productive efficiency, especially by investing more in education. But the data now tell us that economic efficiency depends on still intractable individual characteristics, given current methods of education. The individual characteristics run in families for reasons not easily overridden by social policy. Whatever else we may want to infer from that fact, we ought to bear in mind that in not too many generations differential fertility could swamp the effects of anything else we may do about our economic standing in the world. □



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TRAVEL

IN GALWAY'S FAIR CITY

This old seaport can be the ideal centerpiece of a trip to Ireland

BY CULLEN MURPHY

ALMOST 400,000 Americans visit the Republic of Ireland for pleasure every year, and practically none of them decide or manage to bypass Dublin. Yet there are good reasons to think about leaving Dublin off the itinerary of at least a first trip to Ireland—among them the existence of Galway, a lively but little-heralded city on the other side of the island, which I would recommend in Dublin's stead.

I lived in Dublin for several years, and I love the place. It is, however, a difficult city to get to know or like, or even to respect. It has grown too fast and in an unimaginative way, and urban development at the core continues to destroy Georgian buildings and historic neighborhoods. On brief acquaintance Dublin can seem a middling sort of place, and many tourists arrive with expectations and go away disappointed.

Galway, in contrast, is a nearly perfect capsule of the kind of urban Ireland that most visitors hope to find. It is an old city with some of its medieval character, and almost all of its small-town character, still intact. More and more of Ireland's best writers, artists, dramatists, scholars, craftsmen, and cooks are deciding to make their homes there. While Galway is not a large city—just over 50,000 people live there—it boasts a cosmopolitanism and a sense of self-worth that many larger cities lack. And, as I was reminded earlier this year, on my wife's and my third visit to Galway, it can serve as a base camp for up to several weeks of one-day forays into some of the most spectacular and out-of-the-way regions of western Ireland, where the cold Atlantic throws itself upon the rocks, and green mountains reach toward a purple sky.

Even the ride to Galway from the airport is memorable. All flights to Ireland from the United States arrive at Shannon Airport at around dawn, and on the hour-and-a-half ride north, Ireland wakes up before you. The route winds through lush farmland and market towns

like Ennis and Gort. Schoolchildren in uniforms wait for buses by the roadside. Milkmen make their rounds in small vans. The few large trucks that go by all seem to be loaded with kegs of beer. As dawn lightens into morning, the clouds take on color; even in the rain it is rare for sunshine not to be visible somewhere nearby, playing on a distant field or mossy ruin. Soon the road passes over placid licks of sea that herald the approach of Galway Bay. In the city itself knots of men with caps and ruddy cheeks stand talking and smoking on street corners, waiting for the day to start.

Alf and Fionnuala MacLochlainn, who are friends of my wife's and mine, lived in Dublin for most of their lives and moved to Galway seven years ago in order to live in a place that, as Alf put it recently over dinner with us, was reminiscent of a Dublin that he loved but that has disappeared. Alf MacLochlainn was for many years the director of Ireland's National Library, and in Galway he was, until his retirement last year, the director of the library at University College. It is very hard, he said, to get people to leave Galway once they have ex-

perienced a taste of life there. "You'll find the branch manager turning down a promotion to the head office," Alf said. "Galway is where ambition ends."

By Irish standards Galway is something of an upstart. Most places in Ireland seem to have pedigrees, as places of human occupancy, of two thousand years or more. Some of the bigger cities on the coast or up navigable rivers are considerably younger, having had to await the coming of the Vikings. (Dublin, for example, is a Viking town, and celebrated its millennium only last year.) Galway is younger still. There may have been a fishing village at the mouth of the River Corrib, on Galway Bay, since time immemorial, but Galway as such was not founded until the thirteenth century.

This is no place to review the long, sad story of the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland, which commenced in A.D. 1169. Suffice it to say that scores of Anglo-Norman families were granted large tracts of land in the west of Ireland, possessed them, and then, after a century or so, found themselves either going native, through intermarriage or laziness, or sorely beleaguered by local Gaelic warlords. The Anglo-Norman families that prospered in the west did so primarily by holing up behind the walls of the port they had established at Galway. Galway became a city-state run by merchant oligarchs—the so-called "tribes" of Galway, with names like Lynch, Deane, Joyce, Darcy, and Skerrett—and achieved prosperity through trade with the outside world. Christopher Columbus is believed to have vis-



THE RIVER CORRIB AND THE SPANISH ARCH

ited the city, and to have attended mass at the Church of Saint Nicholas, which was already more than a century old. (A tablet near the church commemorates the deed of a mayor of Galway named Lynch, who hanged his own son for a capital crime when no one else would do so, and thereby midwifed a new word into the English language.) Only one of the merchants' homesteads still stands in its entirety, but medieval walls, doorways, and windows abound, incorporated into later structures in an unthinking, postmodern kind of way. A Gothic arch can lead you into a shoe store. The pattern of streets that was laid down five hundred years ago remains little changed; ancient maps of the city can get you around even today.

But Galway is a working city, not a museum piece. There is grime under its fingernails and salt in its hair. High-tech industries are an important presence in town—Digital Equipment Corporation alone employs 1,500 people—but every second shop still seems to belong to a victualler, baker, bookseller, or publican. The turf fires burning in thousands of hearths and the apples and pears in the racks at every newsagent's stand combine to cast a hazy fragrance over the city which comes home with you in your clothes. Most of the building stock in Galway seems to be at least a hundred years old and is made of cut gray stone; the grayness is relieved by the brightly colored wooden shop fronts and the gold Celtic script that identifies them. Buskers, or street musicians, occupy the intersections, and one's ear is rarely far from the sound of fiddles or pipes.

PERHAPS IRONICALLY for a town founded by foreigners, Galway is the one city in Ireland that still seems fully Irish. Galway lies on the southeastern edge of the most populous Gaeltacht, or Irish-speaking, area, and you may hear Irish spoken casually in shops and on the street. You will certainly hear it spoken if you spend any amount of time in Kenny's Bookshop, on High Street, whose large stock of old and new books includes a wide selection of Irish-language works. Galway also supports an Irish-language theater, An Taibhdhearc na Gaillimhe, which mounts productions year-round. On our most recent trip to Galway my wife and I noticed that An Taibhdhearc was about to stage an Irish-language version of Verdi's *Aida*—an undertaking that somehow epitomized for us what is so winning about the city. Gal-



DRUID LANE

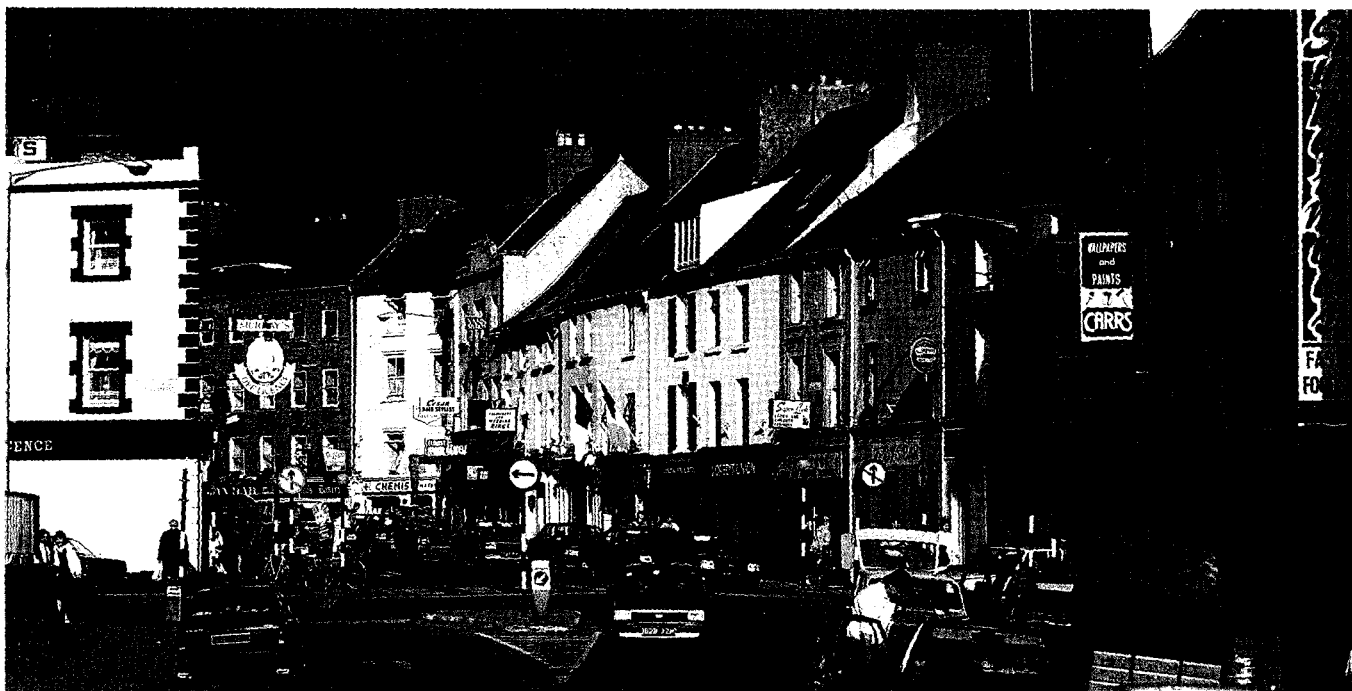
way's other theater, the Druid Lane, has won international acclaim for English-language productions of all kinds, primarily plays by Irish and English writers. The Druid Lane is the provincial rival of Dublin's Abbey Theatre and performs throughout the summer.

The charm of Galway is not wholly an accident. The Galway Chamber of Commerce and Industry has worked aggressively with the city government to ensure, through arm-twisting and tax incentives, that homes and businesses adhere to a high aesthetic standard. Mary Bennett, the president of the chamber and the owner of Galway's largest gift shop, The Treasure Chest, walked around the city with us one afternoon to show off some recent achievements. She pointed to one city block that looked like any other—gray stone, with handsome ground-floor storefronts—and that seemed to have been standing for generations. "That's brand new," she said. "The last time you were here it was a parking lot." In another place residential units had been built around the perimeter of a courtyard in the center of a block of outward-facing shops. "Our aim," Bennett said, "is to get housing into about thirty percent of the city center." We passed a shop front that looked slightly shabby, and Bennett sighed. "That person just won't cooperate," she said. "It's been a problem for years." Then her bright spirits returned. "You know, last year alone we removed a

hundred and eighty neon signs." A new museum and a third theater for the city are soon going to be built on the waterfront near the Spanish Arch, which was once a gate in Galway's walls. From the Spanish Arch a bridge crosses the River Corrib to the Claddagh peninsula, and underneath it passes one Galway attraction that the chamber of commerce takes no credit for: all the salmon that spawn in a 1,200-mile string of Irish lakes.

GALWAY IS SMALL enough that you don't need to prepare for a visit by doing a lot of reading and planning. You can walk the entire city in a day, and orient yourself, and in the process you will be alerted to all the local events of interest by signs and posters in shop windows. Stop in at Kenny's Bookshop. The people who work there seem to know everything that is happening in and around Galway, and they can arm you with copious amounts of information about the city and its environs. On our recent visit Mrs. Kenny sat me down in a rocking chair and piled books and pamphlets in my lap, glossing them with a stream of commentary that was too rich to absorb fully. We came away with some wonderful historical tomes, including Peter Harbison's *Guide to the National Monuments in the Republic of Ireland*—an essential companion no matter where you go in Ireland—and M. D. O'Sullivan's dense but rewarding *Old Galway*. I also bought detailed maps of the mountains of Connemara and of a starkly beautiful upland region of County Clare called The Burren.

Again, one of the advantages of establishing yourself in Galway is that no corner of counties Clare, Galway, and Mayo, which are among the Republic's most rugged and handsome, lies more than an hour or two away. You can spend each day deep in a different part of the countryside, tramping the wild moors and warming to the desolation, and return by nightfall to the embrace of civilization: a shower and change of clothes; a satisfying repast; some music or perhaps a play. The maps that we used, which were drawn by local cartographers, showed every jink and twist of roadway, every escarpment, every ringfort and dolmen, and proved to be a source of enormous pleasure. Perhaps the only drawback to them, and it is merely a seeming one, involved their scale. This is so expansive—one inch equals about an eighth of a mile—that



DOWNTOWN GALWAY, NEAR EYRE SQUARE

some roads that on the maps looked like main thoroughfares turned out to be the most modest of boreens. We spent not a little time driving on cow paths, but as a result we saw lovely places that we otherwise would never have seen, and we could stop anywhere and walk far into the hills knowing exactly what lay behind, say, yonder ridge—a neolithic grave site, a ruined abbey, a holy well whose waters are just the thing for toothaches—and how to get there without breaking a leg.

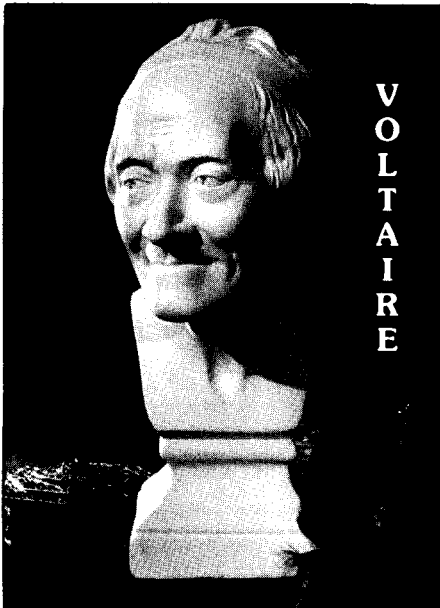
The one thing that may be worth learning about Galway in advance is when its various festivals are to be held. There is an arts festival, a music festival, a theater festival, a buskers festival, a sea-angling festival, an oyster festival, and others; personal taste might incline you to schedule a trip that takes one of these in. Nearly all occur in the spring or summer, when Ireland gets most of its sunshine (and most of its tourists). I happen to prefer the greater variety and sharper bite of the weather in fall and winter, and Ireland in these seasons seems to me more true to itself. In any event, you can find out anything you need to know about Galway's festivals, and about theater, horse racing, and everything else, by writing or calling the Irish Tourist Board (757 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017; 212-418-0800) or the Galway Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Hynes Building, Galway, Ireland; 353-091-63536).

The best hotel in Galway is the Great Southern, on Eyre Square, in the very center of town (353-091-64041). The Great Southern is an old railroad hotel, built in the 1880s. It is small, with about 120 rooms (from \$80 to \$120 a night), and the service is excellent. Far grander is Ashford Castle (353-092-46003), located about forty-five minutes north of Galway on the shores of Lough Corrib in the village of Cong (room rates start at about \$225 a night). The core of Ashford Castle dates back to the thirteenth century. Most of the rest was built in the nineteenth century, when the Guinness family made their home there. The extensive grounds include a golf course and riding trails; even a blood sport or two can be indulged, and the fishing in Lough Corrib, for trout and salmon, is famously good. The appointments inside the castle are elegant but understated, in a masculine, British sort of way (like those in any restaurant named The Jockey Club), and the rooms we have stayed in there on our three trips have been big and handsome, and have offered magnificent views of the lake or the surrounding demesne.

The hotel restaurants at the Great Southern and at Ashford are both good, although Ashford's is by far the better of the two. Among its other consequences, Britain's relinquishment of civil authority in most of Ireland some seventy years ago made possible, for the first time in about eight centuries, the proper cook-

ing of food. The best native cooks have dispensed with imported recipes and now offer simple dishes made from ingredients that are produced locally. Fish, lamb, and wild fowl and game predominate in and around Galway. Alf and Fionnuala Maclochlainn directed us, with themselves securely in tow, to a pair of restaurants that are perhaps the best in the city: the Malt House, which is located in a mews off High Street, and Olde Galway, a tiny place above a shop on the same street. Like Galway itself, these places are homey and unpretentious. They both had fires lit against the evening mist, and there was always fresh soda bread on the table and salmon on the menu.

Finally, do rent a car in Galway and don't be tempted into a planned tour. In a country where the weather is notoriously fickle, freedom and mobility are the best defenses. Besides, there is in Galway and the countryside around it no one mountain, no one museum, no one historical site that simply *must* be seen, and there is thus no reason whatsoever to commit yourself to any course of action weeks or months—or even hours—in advance. This fact, indeed, accounts in no small measure for Galway's appeal. An extra half hour with *The Irish Times* of a morning, an afternoon in a pub, a day spent wandering aimlessly—these are occasions neither of guilt nor of loss. They're part of why you came. □



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ART

SUMMER NIGHTS AT RUSSELL'S CORNERS

The art and life of George Ault

BY SANFORD SCHWARTZ

THE BEST WAY to present the little-known George Ault is to say that in his paintings he could be Edward Hopper's thin-skinned, high-strung younger brother. Ault, who worked at the same time as Hopper, painted a similar lonely and vacant American scene. We see small-town intersections, anonymous warehouses in a city, views through windows, and rooftops in Greenwich Village. But where Hopper's work often shows a powerful, cloudless sunshine, Ault painted a light without warmth. In his most engaging works light itself—a jagged, stark, isolated light—is the protagonist. He gives us the light that's reflected on telephone or power lines at night—light that resembles strands of a necklace. He shows that moment at night when, as one looks out a window, a light from inside the room—from a lamp, say—is suspended outside, in the dark. In a picture of moonlight on a barn roof we see a white rectangle floating in a black void. Ault's best pictures are like short stories with a twist at the end; the setting is a desolate American place, but what we're looking at is an optical magic trick.

George C. Ault was appreciated by some critics in the twenties, when he was starting out, but he exhibited less and less in the thirties and forties, and by his death, in 1948—he was fifty-seven—he had achieved little recognition in the New York art world. He was given a new critical standing by Hilton Kramer in 1961. Reviewing an exhibition of Precisionist art which included Charles Sheeler, Charles Demuth, and Georgia O'Keeffe, Kramer said, "The most interesting artist in the show—the most moving and poetic, and the one with the most compelling fantasy—is George Ault." In 1973 the late Jack Baur, at the Whitney Museum of American Art, in New York, gave the painter his first museum show. It was called "George Ault: Nocturnes," and it concentrated on the

major theme of his art. Last year the Whitney, at its Equitable Center branch, gave him his first full retrospective—it was organized by Susan Lubowsky, who also wrote the catalogue—and there were concurrent exhibitions of paintings and drawings at the Vanderwoude Tananbaum Gallery, in New York. (The Whitney show is at the New Jersey State Museum, in Trenton, from April 29 to June 11.)

AULT IS HARDLY a big figure. He's not in the same class as John Marin, Marsden Hartley, or Edward Hopper; he didn't have their ambition (his pictures are generally quite small). And there were only ten or so pictures at the retrospective that could stand on their own in a top-flight collection of twentieth-century American painting. Yet even in the many works where his imagery is periodish or conventional, we're held by his quietly fanatical desire to balance all the formal elements. There's often something affectingly ungainly or homely about his pictures. As Roberta Smith has written, they have the "fresh, inadvertent abstractness of the early Renaissance. St. Francis, bird on hand, would not be out of place."

And when Ault painted artificial light or moonlight, his pictures were classically balanced and unified. Ault didn't fully know his own powers; he probably never became a master in his own eyes. He seems to have found his great theme—a piercing, seemingly sourceless light—by accident. His mood in general is far bleaker than Hopper's; when he painted light, though, he wasn't a melancholy artist at all. He was, rather, a poker-faced mystic. Ault is the forerunner of Dan Flavin, Myron Stout, and Robert Irwin, artists whose subject is pure radiance.

The primary source of information about the painter is his second wife's 1978 *Artist in Woodstock, George Ault: The*

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By Alvin Tresselt, *Dean of Faculty*

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Independent Years. Louise Ault's writing is self-consciously fancy and drawn-out, but when she sticks to George and the details of their life together, her novel-length memoir complements the paintings. It is like one of the tales that De Quincey heard about and put in his reminiscences of the Lake Country in the Romantic period. We encounter idealistic and virtually penniless lovers who flee the city to a beautiful and consoling, and sometimes rather bleak and forlorn, countryside.

AULT WAS A SUPERIOR, easily wounded, perfectionist loner, a driven and hounded man who had more than his share of misfortune. He came from a well-to-do Cleveland family. His father was in the ink-manufacturing business and a sort of clubman in the arts—he

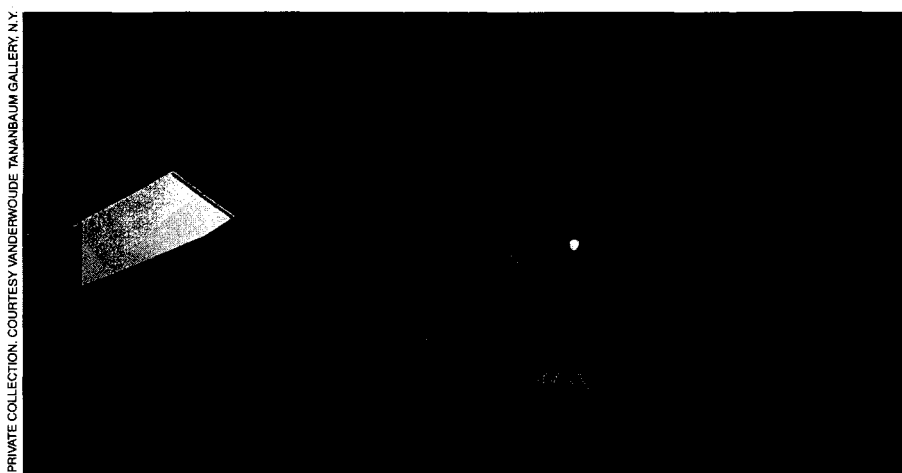
ties—the painter was a mess. His childless marriage had collapsed and he had become an alcoholic; he had little energy for painting—he mostly wanted to blame the art world for ignoring him. Louise was in her twenties, and had come east to be a writer. In a little while they fell in love, and two years later they left the city for Woodstock. When his divorce eventually came through, they married. Ault continued to drink, and, in the main, he refused to seek part-time work; his relations with dealers and galleries had long been poor, and now, in the remaining decade or so of his life, he had no regular outlet for his pictures and, except for a brief period in 1945, he rarely sold any. Receiving rare and meager handouts from friends and family (there was a surviving sister), the couple lived for years in

and at times he was “fey”—he courted his black moods. Yet we like him; through it all he appears modest, hard-working, devoted to his way of painting. And he didn't deceive Louise about their venture; they agreed that they'd give their all for his painting. They managed to buy a plot of land, and they went there from time to time to have picnics or merely to sit and look out. They hoped that one day they'd be able to put up their own cottage, but they never did (and eventually they had to sell the plot). Louise says frequently that at least they had the birds to listen to and watch.

AULT'S WORK LED up to four paintings of Russell's Corners, a Woodstock intersection of three roads, with barns, sheds, and a hanging light. In these paintings of quiet summer nights, when no one is about, Ault transcended himself. If he hadn't made them, his art would lack a compelling image. He painted the site in 1943, twice in 1946, and finally in 1948, not long before his death. Each work is primarily made up of black (the enveloping sky), rust-red (the barns), and white (another building, a tree, and the thin lines of light on the power lines). Ault used the same few elements in each picture, yet each is different from the next in its construction and proportions—in the way we see the hanging streetlamp, the buildings, and the reflections of white light on the wires—and it was exciting, at the show, to see all four pictures together. (They're in separate collections.) Going from one to the next, you can feel you're approaching the place on foot or in a car on different nights, from different roads. In the final picture we get closer to the center, where the light is.

There is a similar tense, expectant note in everything Ault did, and in the Russell's Corners paintings he found an ingenious way of showing his single-mindedness. We see Ault the man (or any person) going back again and again to the same place. Ault admired and absorbed a lot from Giorgio de Chirico, and in the Russell's Corners paintings (and in some others) we're reminded of De Chirico. Yet Ault doesn't feel like a follower. He appears, instead, to be inching his way to a Surrealistic view on his own.

For much of his life Ault was on the outs with the art world, yet he clearly kept abreast of the latest styles, and in



NIGHT AT RUSSELL'S CORNERS (1946) BY GEORGE AULT, OIL ON CANVAS, 16" x 30"

was exactly the sociable fellow that George, one of five children, was not. Ault senior moved his family to London when the kids were growing up, and George, in the happiest years of his life, studied painting in England and traveled in France. Most of the family members were plagued by physical and nervous disorders, though, and after they returned to the United States, one of George's brothers killed himself (together with his spouse). George's mother, mentally unbalanced and suffering from pernicious anemia, died in a New Jersey asylum. His father died of cancer in 1929, and around this time George's two remaining brothers, presumably in anguish because their inheritance had come to nothing, also committed suicide.

By the time Louise Jonas met Ault, on the roof of an apartment building in Greenwich Village—it was the mid-thir-

tiny rented cottages without water or electricity. Thinking about their time there, Louise believes they were the only people in the Woodstock arts community who existed in conditions of such bare purity. She seems uncertain whether she ought to be proud or embarrassed.

In Woodstock she largely shelved her desire to be a fiction writer and took jobs for rent money and supplies. For one job she had to walk miles in the dark on winter mornings, through snow and ice, in order to take a long bus ride to Kingston. At the end of the day she'd return in the dark, looking forward to the moment when their kerosene lamp would suddenly become visible. If she didn't see it, her heart would sink a little—it probably meant he was in the village, boozing.

Louise says that George could be maddeningly iron-willed and moody,

his last years he, like other painters in the forties, tried his hand at images of the churning, swirling unconscious. His experiments with this or that new style tend to be half-hearted, but, perhaps because he kept experimenting with new developments, he remained fit and trim when he made his more conventional Woodstock scenes. His 1948 Russell's Corners picture may be better than his 1943 one, and at the gallery show there was a painting from the forties of a hunter in a mackinaw, with a rifle over his arm, walking by snow-covered fields and a barn on a winter day. The image might be an illustration for a boys' book, yet Ault was in tune with the oyster-gray light of a sunless winter afternoon, and the picture's surface has a luscious, ornamental quality; each detail seems buffed.

Ault's pencil drawings have a lovely ornamental quality too. There are probably more first-rate drawings than first-rate paintings, though the drawings—sky studies and images of city streets, views of old houses and fields and trees—weren't his major efforts. They were done as studies for paintings or, more often, as independent works, and no matter what purpose they served, they feel as full as paintings, mostly because he uses the white, untouched part of the sheet as a color, as an element in itself. Ault renders details—bunches of leaves, a tree's bark—in oddly conventional or purely illustrational ways; yet the more you see of his drawings the more personal and peculiar those passages become. Ault's drawings would look wonderful in a portfolio of their own. (The Drawing Society's long-out-of-print Edwin Dickinson volume would be a good model.)

AULT'S TOUCH AND manner remained the same for almost three decades. He was a visionary painter, but it's to his credit that we don't think of him as such. With the hard, shining surfaces of his paintings and their taut compositions, he's the opposite of any brooding, or gentle, or lost-in-himself painter-poet. He doesn't seem like a painter of nocturnes, either; the word is too fancy for him. Ault fine-tunes your eyes. He makes you aware of delicate light effects that happen, as it were, behind your back. When you drive down a country road at night and see, from the lights of a distant oncoming car, telephone wires turning into thin white lines, you may say to yourself, "An Ault!" □

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Israel and Human Rights

How does Israel behave in the face of Arab uprising?

The so-called "intifada," the uprising of the Arab population in the territories administered by Israel has been going on for more than a year. In that time, over 350 Arabs, mostly young people, have been killed and many have been wounded. The U.S. State Department, in its Report on Human Rights, has been critical of some aspects of Israel's human rights posture.

What are the facts?

■ Israel is a society based on law. Every measure taken by civilian or military authorities is scrutinized by the country's legal authorities. In dealing with the "intifada," Israel is faced with a difficult problem—the uprising of a civilian population. This is a problem very similar to that faced by the British in Northern Ireland, by the Filipinos in its southern islands and the Spanish in the Basque provinces. Responsible government has the obligation to maintain order and to preserve law and to do so with as little loss of life and with as little injury to the civilian population as possible.

■ Israel has done just that. The loss of over 350 Arab lives is of course a tragedy—every human life is precious. But seen in context, the number of casualties is really very small and a reflection on the care and restraint of the Israeli military. Israeli soldiers are confronted daily with violent riots—massive stoning and fire bombing of persons and moving vehicles, attacks with iron bars, chains, knives, Molotov cocktails and other lethal weapons. Such violence is meant to kill. Israeli soldiers and civilians have lost their lives. Almost 1300 Israelis have been injured, some of them critically.

■ The task of the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) is made more difficult by the tactics of the Arabs in having their able-bodied adult men stay behind and having their children and their women confront the IDF. It is a no-win situation for the Israelis. They try to avoid death and injury at all cost. But death and injury are sometimes unavoidable in riot situations. Since Israel is an open society, reporters and television crews from all around the world have access to the happen-

ings, quite a few of which are staged for their benefit. Obviously it is a public relations disaster for the Israelis to have the world see their troops confronting women and children. Those women and children, however, wish to inflict as much damage as they possibly can. They mean to kill.

■ The IDF, one of the finest armies in the world, is trained to defend the country's borders, and not for riot control. Therefore, almost inevitably, errors were made in the initial phases of the uprising. But from the very beginning, detailed instructions were given to the troops on how to react to any given provocation. The orders under which Israeli military personnel operate are specific and well known to every soldier. Those who break the rules are subject to military trial and punishment. The principles of restraint and gradual response are applied. Tear gas is used to control riots. Live bullets are fired only in life-threatening situations. But to some, every means of riot control used by the Israelis, including police batons or rubber or plastic bullets is objectionable.

■ Those residents of the territories who are suspected to have committed serious security offenses are dealt with in full accordance with international law and the humanitarian provisions of the Geneva Conventions. All residents have full access to the Israeli legal system—even to the Israeli Supreme Court. Prisons are unhappy places in every society. But Israeli prisons and detentions centers in which those arrested for security offenses are held, are fully comparable to and adhere to the standards of those in other advanced Western democracies. Certainly, not even the most rebellious Arab detainee in Israel would prefer to serve time in a Syrian, Jordanian, Iraqi or Saudi prison instead.

Within the context of massive human rights abuses throughout the Arab world, the focus on Israel seems to be entirely out of perspective. Other countries in the Middle East lack the most basic elements of human rights—freedom of speech, freedom of the press, free elections, equality for women, freedom of religion, freedom of association. Opponents, instead of facing television cameras, face execution. Those countries do not have to defend themselves against foes who are single-mindedly intent on their destruction. Yet, those nations do not draw the enormous degree of attention that Israel receives. Israel adheres to the highest moral and legal principles. It does so, surrounded though it is by implacable enemies, and consistent with its own security requirements and with its obligation to the international community to maintain law and order in the territories it administers.

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SPORTS

BIRDING BY THE NUMBERS

In pursuit of a record number of bird species seen in a single year

BY STU STULLER

TOWARD THE END of 1986 Sandy Komito and Steve Perry, neither known to the other, each decided that during 1987 they would spot as many species of birds as possible on the North American continent. Komito, fifty-five, the owner of a New Jersey construction firm, set a goal of 650 species, the exact number of species that normally occur in North America. Komito considered his goal modest compared with the record 711 species observed by Benton Basham, a Tennessee anesthesiologist, in 1983; various stray Asian and South and Central American species accounted for the difference in numbers.

Steve Perry, a thirty-seven-year-old grocery-store clerk in Campbell, California, near San Jose, also began the year with a less than record-setting goal. "The plan was to go for six hundred seventy-five," Perry recalls. He had taken a leave of absence from his job to pursue the goal, but by March he decided to quit permanently and give himself over to his bird-watching quest.

Komito and Perry crossed paths in early May in the Chugach Mountains of Alaska, while searching for a small arctic grouse known as the willow ptarmigan. The encounter was hardly a coincidence, because both men were awaiting the departure of a birding expedition to the Aleutian island of Attu, and the Chugach range, an hour's drive from the Anchorage airport, is a good place for a birder to kill a few hours looking for a willow ptarmigan, Alaska's state bird. What *was* a coincidence was that the willow ptarmigan was to be the 528th species of the year for each man. Komito remembers telling Perry, "After the year is over, I'll be glad to tell you how many birds I got, but I don't want to make this a contest or a competition between the two of us."

Contest or not, Komito and Perry were playing a game called Big Year. The American Birding Association is the governing body for birding games, and its rules are stringent. Under ABA Big

Year rules birders have one year (beginning and ending at midnight in the time zone in which the first bird is recorded) to identify as many species of birds as possible in the ABA's North American area—roughly the contiguous states of the United States, Canada, Alaska, and 200 miles off the coast of each.

Playing the game well isn't easy. In 1973 Kenn Kaufman, nineteen, a high school dropout from Kansas, hitchhiked 69,200 miles, and ate dried cat food and sold blood plasma to finance a Big Year. Kaufman was jailed, kidnapped, assaulted, and very nearly washed out to sea. He finished the year birding in Mexico, far outside the legal field of play but with what was then a record 654 species to his credit. Despite his lack of formal education, Kaufman, now thirty-five, is a consultant to the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences' Project VIREO (Visual Resources for Ornithology), an effort to collect, compile, and catalogue photographs of birds as a resource for serious ornithologists.

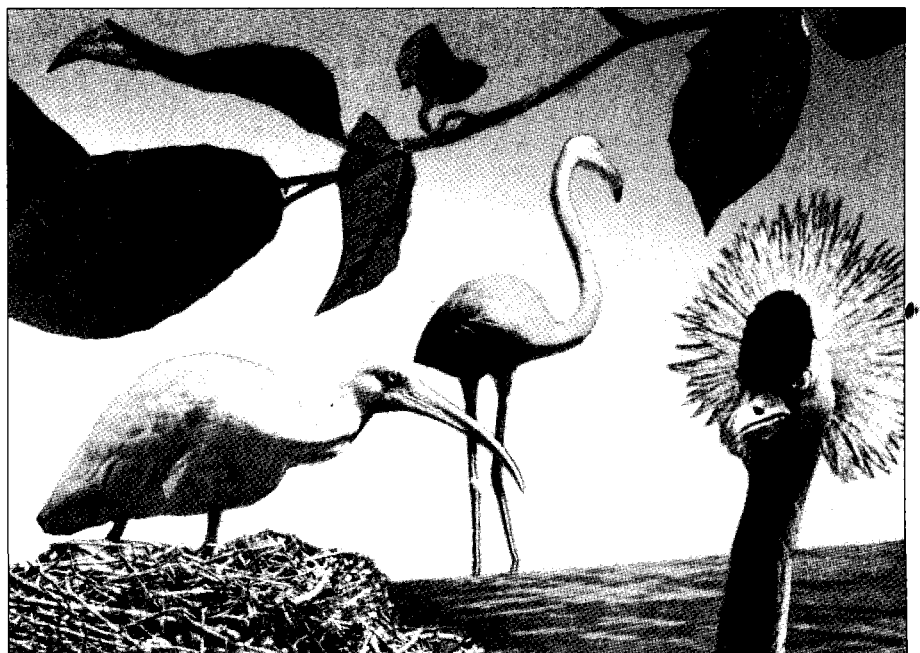
Big Years have changed a good bit since Kaufman's time. Now a spring trip

to Attu, the westernmost link in the Aleutian chain, is considered mandatory for a successful Big Year. Attu serves as a port of call for a stunning variety of Asian birds blown off their usual migration routes by storms. Attu may be 1,482 miles from Anchorage, but it is North American soil, and any bird landing there is fair game. Expeditions to Attu are limited to no more than forty-eight people and cost \$3,900, round trip from Anchorage. Kaufman's entire Big Year budget was less than \$1,000.

A good spring on Attu can bring a Big Year venture to the threshold of 700 species, the current benchmark of the sport. By all accounts 1987 was a banner year on Attu: twenty-eight Asian vagabonds made an appearance on the island. Sandy Komito met his goal of 650 species by spotting a white-winged tern in Delaware on his birthday, July 13. Rather than pack it in for the year, Komito decided on a more ambitious goal. That same month Steve Perry decided to revise his goal upward as well.

AFTER MAN, BIRDS are perhaps the most visible creatures on earth. Hummingbirds flutter around feeders on the upper Texas coast; emperor penguins stand shoulder to shoulder through Antarctica's winter storms. The challenge of birding lies in the fact that not all birds are easily seen, and seeing the unexpected is birding's reward.

"It's the thrill of discovery," Komito explains. "There's always the unknown. Most of the time when we go out, we know some of the birds we are going to



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see, but a lot of birds we don't expect, and that's what adds thrill to the day. Birding is like going to a reunion. Some birds are like old friends you haven't seen in a long time."

The distinguishing characteristic of an expert birder is an encyclopedic knowledge of the identifying marks, sounds, and habits of every species of North American bird, in each stage of plumage and development. Expert birders take considerable pride in their ability to identify birds quickly and accurately in the field. Nonetheless, their ultimate thrill is that rare occasion when an unfamiliar species flies into view.

"The really good birders don't need a field guide, because they already have it memorized," says Jim Tucker, who founded the American Birding Association, in 1969, for bird watchers interested in keeping score. "When they see a bird, they know it instantly. And if they don't know it, then they get real excited and say, 'That's a good bird.'"

Tucker founded the ABA "almost as a joke." Instead of sending out his usual Christmas greetings, he mailed his birding cronies a mimeographed newsletter titled *Bird Watcher's Digest*. Tucker's friends encouraged him to continue publishing it. Life lists, annual lists, and Big Day lists became a staple. "But soon," Tucker explains, "it became obvious that everybody was using different rules." In 1973 the ABA was officially organized, with three main committees, for publications, rules, and a checklist. The publications committee put out the journal, the rules committee drew up competitive guidelines, and the checklist committee compiled a list of countable birds.

Today the ABA has 6,000 members but no national headquarters (beyond P.O. Box 6599, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80934) and no local chapters. For the \$24 annual dues, members receive the successor to *Bird Watcher's Digest*, titled *Birding*. This is a bimonthly journal containing articles on finding and identifying birds and also book and equipment reviews. (The term "bimonthly" is more hopeful than factual. The ABA hopes to get *Birding* back on a regular schedule once the final issue for 1988—now scheduled for August, 1989—goes out.)

Birding games are governed by an honor code: birders do not, as a matter of principle, claim uncountable birds for their lists. An uncountable bird might be a sharp-shinned hawk on the Mexican

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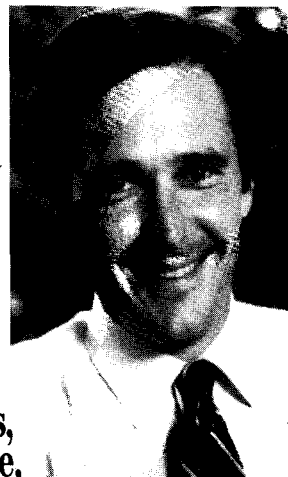
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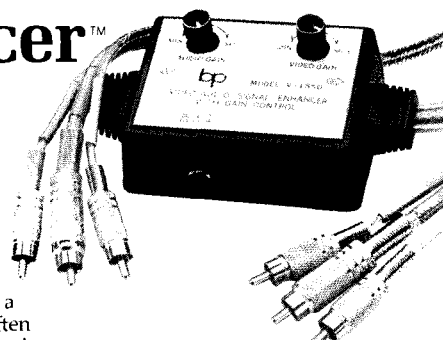
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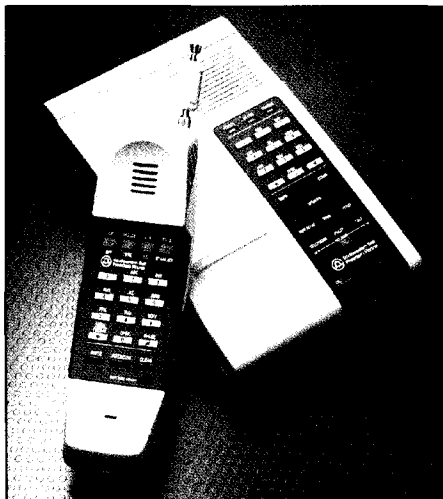


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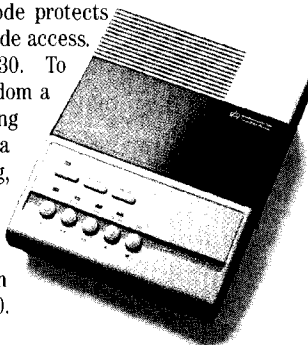
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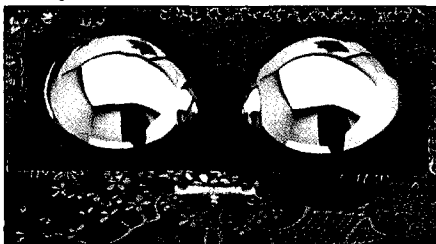
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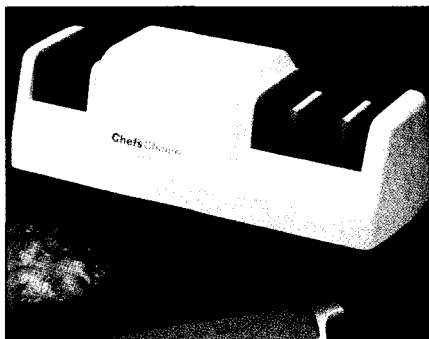


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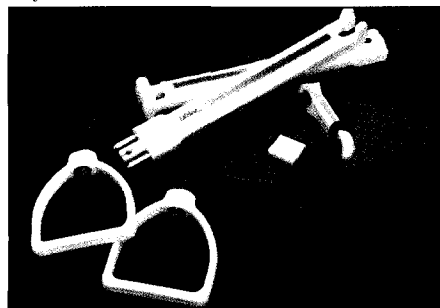
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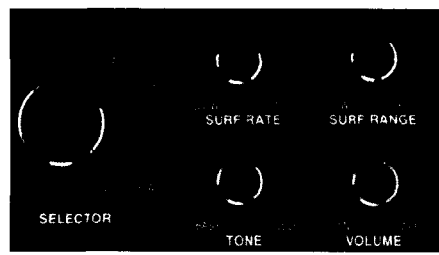


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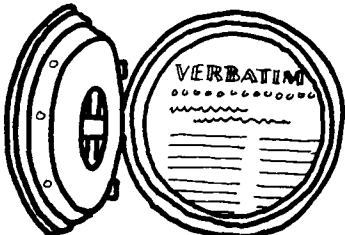
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side of the Rio Grande (out of bounds), a yellow-headed parrot roosting near Miami, Florida (surely an escaped caged bird), or a bird that simply couldn't be accurately identified.

Naturally, the honor code does not exist in a vacuum. Because birding is basically a highly specialized scavenger hunt, a premium is placed on accurate and well-documented identifications. A person claiming a rare bird, or a common bird outside its natural habitat, can expect to be rigorously questioned about what he saw. Sliding a bogus sighting past a bevy of birding experts is about as easy as getting a forged Renoir into the Louvre. Birders say that credibility is lost only once, and that "word gets around."

Generally, however, false claims simply aren't a factor in birding. The rare instance of a misidentified bird is almost always just an enthusiastic mistake. Nonetheless, with the emphasis on accuracy for which birding is famous, a single improperly identified bird can throw the validity of an entire list into question. James Vardaman set the standard for Big Year verification during his record 1979 Big Year, when he had a competent witness co-sign for each of the 699 birds on his list.

Sometimes not even the best verification measures by an acknowledged expert are enough to satisfy everyone. Benton Basham, for example, documented each of the 711 species on his 1983 Big Year list using witnesses and photography. Basham knows more about birds than a shelf's worth of field guides, and his North American life list is the longest on record. (At this writing, Basham's life list stands at 795 species. He hopes to break the 800 barrier by the end of 1990.) Yet a few birders felt compelled to question whether he should have counted a rare storm petrel on his Big Year list. The question boiled down to the size of the patch of white on the bird's tail.

MOST LISTERS ARE dedicated amateurs. Komito and Perry, for example, would be nonplussed to see themselves identified as ornithologists, and many professional birders maintain that counting species and flaunting lists leads to sloppy birding. Nonetheless, some amateur birders become polished professionals, and even the listers sometimes make valuable contributions to ornithology's body of knowledge. Kaufman, the erstwhile dropout, has had a career that

is a perfect example of the latter situation. In addition to his work with Project VIREO, Kaufman edits regional reports for *American Birds*, a scholarly journal put out by the National Audubon Society. The regional reports, Kaufman says, "offer a fairly clear picture of species range expansion, and it's all based on information collected by amateur birders."

Although the ABA functions as the governing body for listing, the organization is careful to keep its embrace casual, because the birding community is roughly divided between listers and people who despise listers. "There's a legitimate interest in listing," Larry Balch, the ABA president, says, "and we'll support it, because nobody else is going to. The purpose of the ABA is to support birding and birders no matter how people have fun at it."

What bothers Balch and others is that some listers don't seem to have any fun. Victor Emanuel leads birding tours for a living and occasionally plays reluctant guide to a Great White Bird Hunter armed with a shopping list of target species. Emanuel says, "The classic line is 'Okay, I've seen it. What's next?' I've actually seen people pull out their lists before they react to a bird, like they've got to check their list to see if they should be excited."

Whatever reservations Emanuel may have about compulsive listing, he is himself an enthusiastic competitor in birding games. In 1957, at the age of seventeen, he organized a "Christmas count" in Freeport, Texas. Christmas counts originated in 1900 as an alternative to competitive hunts in which armed revelers trampled through the bush, plugging wildlife by the pound.

Freeport's Christmas counts have traditionally been among the highest in the nation, owing both to expert field marshaling and to excellent habitat. For the 1987 count 150 birders split into specialized teams and fanned out across the marshes, beaches, and woods of Freeport's designated playing area, a circle fifteen miles in diameter. They returned with a collective list of 215 species—just beating Orange County, California, for the nation's highest tally. Freeport's count might have gone one bird higher had their crack hummingbird team been able literally to net what they suspected to be an Allen's hummingbird and to measure its tail feathers for a positive identification.

Christmas counts and even Big Years are fairly sedate compared with Big Day

competitions, in which teams, usually of four, have twenty-four hours to identify as many birds as possible in a designated area. Since the designated area is usually the team's home state, interstate rivalries are inevitable, and none is more spirited than the competition between Texas and California. The two states have exchanged the Big Day record four times in the past decade.

In 1984 a team of Californians pushed the Big Day record to 243 species; the following year Emanuel organized a team that brought the record back to Texas. To beat the Californians, the Texans had to maintain a remarkable pace; they had to spot one species about every three minutes, for twenty-four hours. Since Big Day rules require that at least 95 percent of the birds on the final list be seen by all the members of the team, the outfit could not afford weak links.

Emanuel put together an all-star team of birders, including himself, Jim Tucker, Roger Tory Peterson, and Greg Lasley, the south Texas editor of *American Birds*. Peterson is the lone birding celebrity whose fame extends into the wider world. The account of his 1953 Big Year with James Fisher, which appears in his book *Wild America*, has inspired at least two generations of birders, and his field guides are sold in bookstores across the nation. Although Peterson, who has just turned eighty, lives in Connecticut, he frequently bats cleanup for Big Day teams elsewhere.

The four set out at the stroke of midnight, using flashlights to pick off birds in nests scouted in advance, but the advantage of their predawn start evaporated at daybreak, when the plane scheduled to fly the team from the lower Rio Grande Valley to the Texas hill country was delayed for an hour. A lost hour on a Big Day is a near-crippling blow, and the team was close to abandoning hope when the plane at last arrived. By flying low, the group was able to pick up a few birds en route to the hill country for an abbreviated visit. Then they flew on to the upper Texas coast, where they got back in the race by spotting three countable hawks and a woodpecker while waiting for a Swainson's warbler to reply to the chirps emanating from Emanuel's portable tape player.

The record 244th species came that night, when a king rail fluttered in front of the headlights of the team's marsh buggy as they cruised the beaches of Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. The

team finished at midnight in a piny woods, listening to Emanuel's tape player boom out unrequited calls for a barred owl.

California has yet to try to recapture the record. Tucker maintains that the Californians have virtually ceded superiority to Texas. "They know if we'd had that hour we lost," he says, "we'd have blown them away."

BENTON BASHAM organized his 1983 Big Year chase by dividing the birds of North America into five categories according to how difficult they are to spot. Under his system, code 1 birds are those that are easily seen, if only the birder looks. Code 1 birds include robins, crows, blue jays, golden eagles, and Canada geese, among a host of other species. Code 2 birds are also relatively easy to spot but may require a special trip. Whooping cranes are code 2 birds. True, few remain, but the location of their nesting habitat is hardly a secret.

Together, codes 1 and 2 comprise 610 North American species, most of which can be seen by simply hitting a few birding hot spots—for example, High Island, Texas, north of Galveston Bay. High Island is the site of the first wooded area that migrating birds encounter after their exhausting flight across the Gulf of Mexico. During migration season the island is so rich with diversity that birders can literally sit in lawn chairs and busily tick birds off their lists.

Code 3 birds comprise the remainder of North America's 650 regularly occurring species. A code 3 bird can be seen if the birder is willing to make a special effort for that species alone—usually a carefully timed trip, such as a winter visit to the Rio Grande Valley to see a hook-billed kite.

Code 4 birds, among them the greater flamingo and the short-tailed albatross, are sighted every few years in North America, but their appearances are so rare—perhaps only a few times each decade—that spotting one in a specific year is largely a matter of chance. Code 5 birds are strangers from other continents, like the storm-weary Asian species seeking respite on Attu. Code 4 and 5 species are known as "chase birds," meaning that avid birders will drop business or pleasure to pursue them.

Rare birds, once identified, attract birders faster than bread crumbs attract pigeons. When a crane hawk showed up at the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, in Texas, in December of 1987, en-

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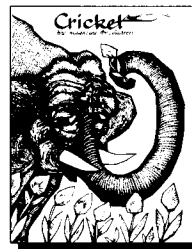
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Coming Next Month In The Atlantic



INDEFENSIBLE

Must we spend \$170 billion a year defending Europe? Must we continue to waste a third of the defense budget? Is our overall military strategy adequate in a world in which nuclear weapons have lost their military and political significance? These are among the questions that *The Atlantic* will explore in four articles on defense.



SOULS ON ICE

by James Lieber

No longer exotic, the freezing of human embryos for later implantation raises tough legal and ethical questions.



STONE COWBOY ON THE HIGH PLAINS

by Mark Jacobs

"Roger knew that Eloy's men were the ones who broke into his tent and took the money. He remembered nothing unmistakably identifiable about any of them. Not a human smell, or an individual cough. They fell on top of him, clamped a hand over his mouth. . . ." A short story.

abling the first North American sighting of the species, birders turned out by the hundreds. But that was practically a private showing compared with the descent of 2,000 birders on Newburyport, Massachusetts, the weekend after a Ross's gull was spotted there, in 1975. According to *The Pettingell Book of Birding Records*, a compendium of trivia both serious and frivolous, the gull went on to become the most-watched bird of all time: some 10,000 birders observed it in the weeks following.

KENN KAUFMAN concentrated on the regularly occurring North American species for his 1973 Big Year, but by 1987 bagging all 650 of the regular species was considered a given—merely the ante to enter the game. Big Year strategies had grown more sophisticated. Sandy Komito's plan was to chase any rarity that dared show its face on the North American continent.

The first day of 1987 set the tone for Komito's entire year. On New Year's Eve, Komito had flown from New Jersey to San Francisco, spurred by reports that an oriental greenfinch had been spotted near Eureka, California. He located the greenfinch around 11:00 A.M. on New Year's Day (bagging more than forty local species in the process) and immediately caught a plane to Arizona, where a rufous-backed robin had been sighted.

Throughout the year Komito relied heavily on information from the North American Rare Bird Alert, a subscriber service started in 1985 by Bob Odear, of High Point, North Carolina, and recently sold to the Houston Audubon Society. For \$20 a year subscribers gain access to NARBA's hotline of tape-recorded information on rare-bird sightings, based on reports from birding's lightning-quick grapevine and a network of 375 experts. The tape is updated whenever new sightings are confirmed, often three times a day. Since a rarity is usually the only bird of its species on the continent, chasing it tends to be like hunting for a specific rabbit. Nonetheless, location information is often quite precise, sometimes designating particular trees.

The hotline is NARBA's basic service. Birders like Komito submit lists of desired species to NARBA, which files the lists in a computer programmed to kick out the names and phone numbers of people who wish to be notified personally when their birds arrive. Fees are assessed on a per-bird basis, and the possi-

bility of a phone call at any hour of the night is understood.

Bob Odear called Komito an average of once a week throughout 1987. Komito kept his travel bag packed, ensuring a fast departure, often within an hour.

Steve Perry followed a more traditional and less expensive strategy, circling the country three times, rendezvousing with migrations and hunkering down in prime wildlife habitats like the Point Reyes peninsula and Big Bend National Park, identifying everything that flapped a wing. However, as the possibility of 700 species loomed, Perry turned to chasing, putting trips on his credit cards and going into debt. By November both Komito and Perry were in the 700s.

According to Odear, "December went crazy for everybody. Texas exploded with post-breeding wanderers from Mexico." Post-breeding wanderers are birds that leave their natural range after their chicks are born, and T-shirts bearing that term were hot-selling items for Odear last year.

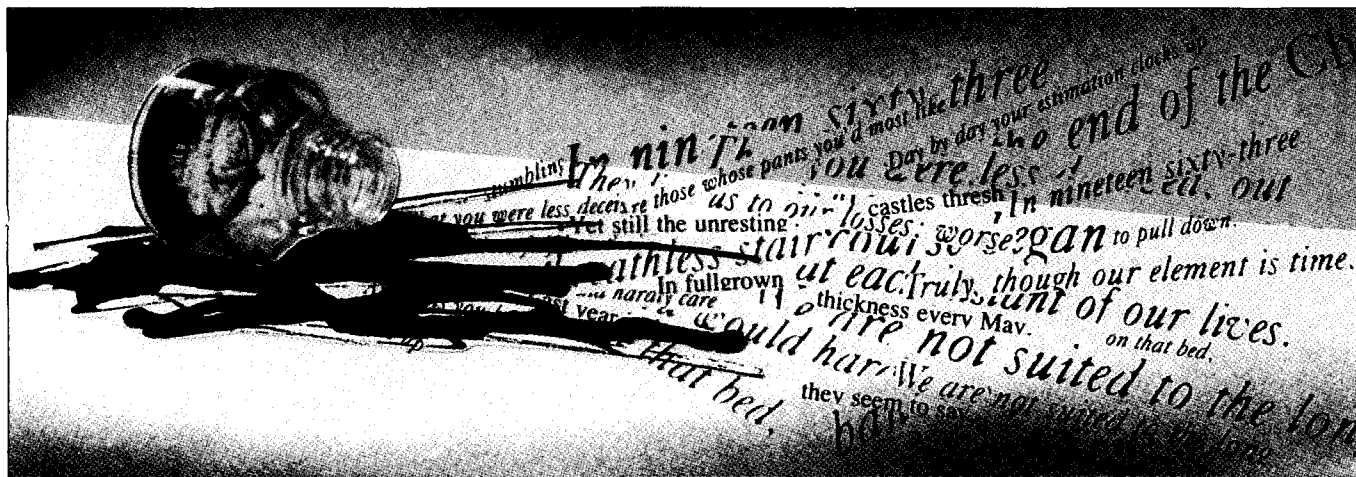
By the time 1987 was over, Perry had 711 birds to his credit—tying Benton Basham's record—and Komito had a phenomenal 729. Odear regards Komito's list as a landmark achievement but considers Perry's total no less remarkable. "My God, he saw 711 species and he hardly spent any money!"

That is not exactly the way Steve Perry sees it. He estimates that his Big Year cost around \$20,000. Sandy Komito refuses to think, much less talk, about the amount of money he spent, acknowledging only that he accumulated more than 300,000 miles on various frequent-flyer programs.

Would Komito do it again? "I really can't say what the future may hold. Once I recognize how much time, money, and effort was required, I may be content just to look over my list."

Komito's list has, of course, been a source of interest for other birders. When Larry Balch, of the ABA, received it for verification, he was forced to pare eight birds from the list, because they were either introduced species, like the green parakeet, or ones not on the ABA's official checklist yet. However, a few of the birds not on the official list—the crane hawk, for instance—may be added when the checklist committee meets again, and could therefore be reinstated on Komito's list. A year and a half after Komito's big adventure ended, his record, according to Balch, stands at "seven hundred twenty-one, plus escrow." □

BOOKS



THE SADDEST ENGLISHMAN

BY PETER DAVISON

COLLECTED POEMS

by Philip Larkin,

edited and with an introduction by
Anthony Thwaite.

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$19.95.

PHILIP LARKIN, perhaps the finest English poet of his generation, died in 1985 at the age of sixty-three, leaving behind him a legion of frustrated admirers. This sardonic, lonely, despondent artist was unique among the English poets after Auden in his power to reach across national boundaries; but after he first attracted a following with his 1955 collection, *The Less Deceived*, he produced only two more collections in thirty years, *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964) and *High Windows* (1974). What Larkin's long-awaited *Collected Poems* reveals is that after 1974 his poetry seems to have surrendered to despair and silence: Anthony Thwaite has found fewer than twenty poems, mainly unpublished, to speak for those last eleven years.

But this book does a tremendous service. Thwaite has carefully arranged all of Larkin's mature poetry in order of its completion, and he has relegated youthful and apprentice work to a separate section, which amply proves that nothing worthwhile is being hidden from us. Thus the reader shares an almost biographical journey through the heartening rise and depressing fall of a writing life. Born in 1922 in Coventry, Larkin

showed great precocity as a teenage poet, his muse vibrating to the echoes of Auden. At Oxford, during the Second World War, he was introduced to the work of Yeats by the poet Vernon Watkins, and he embraced it in dozens of imitations. After Oxford, Larkin spent most of his mature life in the ancient but foundering fishing port of Hull, in Yorkshire, where he served as university librarian and where he died. He was unusual among English poets in that he lived out his days in secondary cities, neither dallying in London nor spending any lengthy period of time in the countryside.

However despondent Larkin ultimately became, his poetry, in Thwaite's exemplary edition, reveals a youth that began in Wordsworthian gladness, in "a dream of sea and hay." Those increasingly rare poetic passages that deal with the satisfied senses seem always to evoke grass and the sea. But when Larkin's work ripened, after Oxford, he emerged as the most polished of craftsmen, the most inhibited of personalities, the wittiest of self-deprecators. Yet Larkin discovered disappointment over and over again with an air of ghastly triumph.

*For you would hardly care
That you were less deceived, out
on that bed,
Than he was, stumbling up the
breathless stair
To burst into fulfilment's desolate
attic.*

Once Larkin's Oxford phase was over, words like *failure* and *loss* began to steal into his poetry like recidivist thieves. Failure gradually wound its way, obses-

sively, into a desolate counterpoint to images of the sea and the fields. The early work, expressing a time when meadow, grove, and stream called out to the poet, began to give way under the pain of some "obscure hurt" like that which afflicted Henry James and which, Larkin's poems intimate, arose from some sexual rebuff. A long poem, "The Dance," never finished, and published here for the first time, seems destined to get to the crux of the matter, but it breaks off in mid-sentence; other poems make mock of his frustrations:

*Sexual intercourse began
In nineteen sixty-three
(Which was rather late for me)—
Between the end of the Chatterley
ban
And the Beatles' first LP.*

In mid-career Larkin seems to have written with relative copiousness, though spurts of creativity alternated with periods of dormancy. At this stage his work increasingly declared its debt to the poems of Thomas Hardy: formal yet demotic, earthy, aware of society's discontents, ironic, though Larkin's work leans toward self-castigation where Hardy would have taken the road leading to grief and regret. Glimpses of the unfulfilled, distant love appear ("Leaving me desperate to pick out / Your hands, tiny in all that air, applauding") but are shoved aside by animadversions on the decline of England, whether in looking back to 1914 ("Never such innocence, / Never before or since") or, in "Homage to a Government," complaining that "Next year we shall be living in a country / That brought its soldiers home for lack of money," or expressing sardonic

World Statement

From the International Committee for the Defense of Salman Rushdie and his Publishers (USA)

On February 14th the Ayatollah Khomeini called on all Muslims to seek out and execute Salman Rushdie, the author of *The Satanic Verses*, and those involved in its publication worldwide.

We, the undersigned, insofar as we defend the right to freedom of opinion and expression as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, declare that we also are involved in the publication.

We are involved whether we approve the contents of the book or not. We appreciate the distress the book has aroused and deeply regret the loss of life associated with the ensuing conflict.

We call upon world opinion to support the right of all people to express their ideas and beliefs and to discuss them with their critics on the basis of mutual tolerance, free from censorship, intimidation and violence.

We request all world leaders to continue to repudiate the threats made against Salman Rushdie and those involved in his publication worldwide, and to take firm action to ensure that these threats are withdrawn.

Thousands of literary figures around the world have put their names to this statement. These are some of them:

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Eric Ambler, UK
Yehuda Amichai, ISR
Babakh Amir-Khosravi, IRN
Kingsley Amis, UK
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outrage at the state of the culture ("Don't read much now: . . . / . . . Get stewed: / Books are a load of crap"). Death becomes a second obsession, and age; in one poem, "The View," Larkin seems to be announcing his finish at fifty, even though at fifty Hardy in his poetry was just getting up steam.

At the bottom of this wonderful poet's imagination, however, lies the dominant twentieth-century British vision, one of nostalgia for a glorious past (splendor in the grass) combined with a sour self-criticism:

*Truly, though our element is time,
We are not suited to the long
perspectives
Open at each instant of our lives.
They link us to our losses: worse,
They show us what we have as it once
was,
Blindly undiminished, just as
though
By acting differently we could have
kept it so.*

It is tragic to read through the exquisitely wrought, heartbreakingly endearing passages of Larkin's work and find the poet not only predicting his own failure but also fulfilling it, sinking from satire into obscenity, from self-pity into self-hatred, from disgust with society to withdrawal from it. Oh, the journey is illuminated with wit, as in "Administration":

*Day by day your estimation clocks up
Who deserves a smile and who a frown,
And girls you have to tell to pull
their socks up
Are those whose pants you'd most like
to pull down.*

But the destination rings with pathos. One of Larkin's last public poems, "Aubade," begins, "I work all day and get half-drunk at night . . .," and another begins, "I never remember holding a full drink." It sounds remarkably like the aftermath of empire, nipping at the *chota peg* on the bungalow veranda while the native troops march back to their barracks—scenes and feelings all too familiar in the world of Masterpiece Theatre.

Perhaps this collective nostalgia has something to do with the reason why Larkin's *Collected Poems* has sold more than 40,000 copies in Britain since October—"Something to do with violence / A long way back, and wrong rewards, / And arrogant eternity." Larkin's poetry rings the knell on the white man's triumph, on the arts and riches of the island kingdom, on a culture of which he

regarded himself as one of the last qualified, yet impotent, stewards.

English poetry since Larkin's heyday has turned to deeper, supranational roots in the primitive past, in the work of such poets as Geoffrey Hill and Ted Hughes, and only recently have such younger poets as Tony Harrison and Craig Raine, after a long, grave pause to reflect, begun taking up the instruments that Larkin left them—rhyme, humor, irony—to resume the sort of Little England music that this sweet, sad poet left us. To have this poignant collection of his work in one volume now is a great gift, one of the prizes of the decade. □

BORN-AGAIN FIRST NOVELS

BY BENJAMIN DEMOTT

PROSPECT

by Bill Littlefield.
Houghton Mifflin, \$17.95.

DEXTERITY

by Douglas Bauer.
Simon and Schuster, \$17.95.

SOMETHING HAPPENED TO CONVENTIONAL first novels on the way to post-modernism: taste turned against them. Their protagonists—youngsters coming of age, feisty artists claiming their space—were understood to be "thinly disguised" versions of the authors; identification was invited; lit'r'y-leaning audiences empathized. But inevitably, rude questions arose. Why the disguise? Why the epistemologically naive distinction between "masks" and "real selves"? Why not go straight, in autobiography? And with the questions came a certain taunting—whose influences ranged from sexual permissiveness to the death of God—of the basic coming-of-age materials. So you lost your faith: big deal. So you discovered sex, art, and learning: tell me about it. So you want to be a great writer: who needs this?

Filmmakers continue to employ the coming-of-age story; set within its frame, fornication and violence recover shock value—as in the 1986 movie *Blue Velvet*. Brat-packer novelists allude to one or another of the story's conventions in the course of composing dopehead guides. Poets poach on its turf, running up life stories in anapests, recalling first seductions and related occasions in

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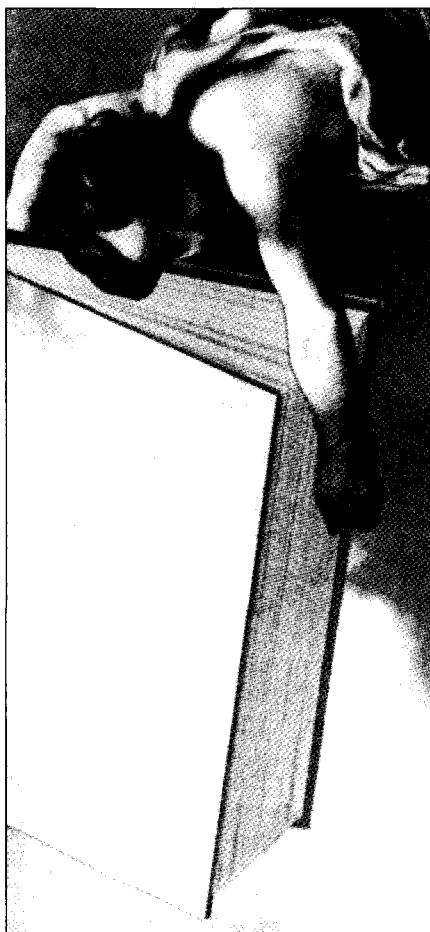


campy tones that tease portentous dawns. (Daryl Hine's *In and Out*, a 300-page "confessional poem," is an amusing recent example of the mock first novel in verse.) But *jeux d'esprit* are one thing and truly serviceable aesthetic forms are another. After an extended run in adaptations by various hands, still unforgettable in the original, the Thomas Wolfe-Eugene Gant show is off the boards; people have moved on.

One result of the movement is the appearance of first books that betray few signs of firstness—trim, skillfully arranged, un-self-indulgent narratives that get on with entertainment and instruction while directing zero attention to their authors. Bill Littlefield's *Prospect* is such a work. It's about Pete Estey, a prematurely retired baseball scout foundering in a Florida rest home, and Louise, a black maid in the home, who recovers Estey for the game of life. An energetic, giving woman and an old Dodger fan, Louise believes not only that Estey has been sidelined for no cause and is sinking into self-pity but also that if he stirs himself, he can help her grandnephew Jack, who wants to play pro ball. Part of *Prospect* tells how the maid entices the scout back onto the trail of talent; the rest shows us what happens when a baseball man self-defined as over the hill bends to the task of guiding one last youngster through the maze to the majors.

In a note Bill Littlefield—hitherto best known for sports features on National Public Radio—acknowledges that some baseball gossip in his book is borrowed from earlier works, including books by Roger Angell and Eliot Asinof. But no stale stuff is admitted. Littlefield is alert to the respects in which major-league ball clubs are businesses, as computer-dependent as banks and racing stables. His insider talk feels authentic. ("Build up to your fastball. Bring it in as close to knee high and straight as you can. I want to see if it naturally does anything on its own.") Spikes on concrete, bats rattled on a bat rack, and other sensations are vivid. So, too, are attitudes: "Sometimes [reporters and broadcasters] were so full of self-loathing in the presence of these movie-star handsome kids that it would ooze from them like blood from a wound." What's best about the book, though, is the current of affection flowing through it. Pete Estey needs only brief prodding to recover his caring nature. The figures who populate his memory—from the wife he's divorced to his fellow scouts—live in his

remembrance as generous and selfless. The youngster he's currently helping is admirably unsnotty as well as gifted. *Prospect* is the sort of work in which other people's good luck is celebrated with singing and dancing and grownups put the word *love* in play without embarrassment. People who, like myself, remember old-style first novels fondly nevertheless know better than to deny that they were one-person shows, long on self-panegyrics. But this new-style first novel—informed, kind, touching—introduces a half-dozen characters (includ-



ing one or two dotty aged) who are both solidly specified and easy to like. Bill Littlefield's career on the fiction field opens with a standup double to center.

ANOTHER RESULT of the decline of the me-first coming-of-age story is that new writers dare to pay attention to nonliterary—even to non-middle-class—aspirations. The dream of ascent finds fresh settings; nonmaterial desire is democratized. In Douglas Bauer's first novel, *Dexterity*, an oppressed young woman barely out of her teens struggles to lift herself from extremely bleak ex-

perience. The scene is Myles, New York, an imagined going-nowhere, "desolate village" in real Columbia County. The heroine, Ramona King, conceives as a school kid the hope of "stay[ing] above the common moments" of the place, believes unremarkably that she can realize that hope by marrying her high school sweetheart, suffers unremarkably a swift disillusionment—yet doesn't capitulate. Her first attempt at flight ends with a car accident and the loss of a hand; helpless and wretched, she's returned to her stony husband. After bearing him a son, she strikes out once more as a runaway, minus her child, this time for good.

The book's distinction derives from the author's own audacity; he possesses the courage of respect. He knows that wherever it occurs—among the rural or urban dispossessed, accompanied or not by clarity about or interest in the beautiful and good—the hunger to take control of one's life, to risk all for a vision of promise, lays strong claim to dignity. He knows, further, that people rejected when the will to "stay above" asserts itself may themselves suffer humiliation, and that this deserves better than shrugging dismissal. Rage and frustration drive Ramona King's husband hard when she deserts him. He moves out of his house into a lean-to built of junked car doors, violently attacks his best friend (a co-worker on a road crew), and commences a drunken, revenge-obsessed, hamlet-by-hamlet search for his wife. Nothing in his behavior warrants heroicizing, and nothing is heroicized; Ed King is a product less of demons than of bar-and-grill machismo, the wasteland called school, the conditions of working life. But Bauer evokes both his pride and his erratically exacting self-discipline in ways that shatter stereotypes; in place of a "representative figure" or "culturally deprived" rough diamond we're given a believably and pitably tormented man.

The same scrupulosity about inarticulate but substantive feelings marks Bauer's treatment of his heroine. Early in her flight Ramona King can afford no thoughts except of survival; she's homeless, jobless, skill-less, terrified of being returned to Myles. Later, as she begins to make her way in a job and a dwelling-place that allow her to hide her past, she meets the fiercest punisher: isolation. Attempting to imagine herself into connectedness, she spies on lives led in an apartment across the street. She joins a crowd on a station platform, pretending

that, like the others, she's awaiting an arriving passenger. She puzzles a coffee-shop waitress acquaintance by talking abstractedly—and poignantly—about babies ("A baby's head, it's like an egg. You think of it bein' round, like a ball, while you hold it. . . . But it's really like an egg"), using words that simultaneously claim and deny her identity. The novelist pauses patiently over the working world's spare, wary sympathy with the runaway's monologues, at once honoring the decency of it and defining its limits. "You do know something about kids," the waitress remarks, watching Ramona quizzically. "Well, I better get hustlin' here."

On occasion the language of *Dexterity* waves for attention ("the snow was a particulate wall beyond his windshield").

Those dropped g's and the like kowtow to stereotypes that the author at his best rejects. We're told too little about the origins of Ramona King's aspirations. Even by the upper Taconic the tides of life may not run as nasty, brutish, and obscene as they do in this book. Both these new novelists are, in fact, a shade monochromatic (Bauer too uniformly blackish, Littlefield too uniformly bright).

But each is strikingly accomplished. Old-style first novelists fought the depersonalizing culture their way, dramatizing the force of their feeling for their own unique young selves. New-style first novelists (to judge from the pair at hand) continue the scrap, dramatizing the force of their feeling for others. Tastes vary and time moves; the resistance is all. □

BRIEF REVIEWS



THE PROGRESS OF THE SEASONS by George V. Higgins. Holt, \$18.95. Mr. Higgins was taken to his first Red Sox game at age six and a bit by John and Charlie, who were, respectively, his father and grandfather. It takes some pages for the reader to sort out the relationships, and many more to learn that John and Charlie, in addition to being impassioned baseball fans, were exceptionally fine men. While ostensibly (and principally, in terms of space) writing about the Red Sox and assorted baseball arcana, Mr. Higgins has quietly included some autobiography and a loving tribute to the seniors who introduced him to a lifetime of serious study and masochistic pleasure—for the Sox have been tormenting their followers ever since they sold off Babe Ruth. The team is, however, reliable in its own way, for while other things may change for the worse, there remain "nine young men on a level field, with bats and gloves and ball, an orderly and gracious world of bad tempers and foul language, precise rules and near riots, celebrations capped by requiems—and then we say: it's just a game." For Mr. Higgins and his like, it is closer to a religious vocation—but much more fun.

FLAUBERT by Herbert Lottman. Little, Brown, \$24.95. Mr. Lottman is the kind of biographer who sticks to document-

able fact and avoids, except in one reasonable instance in this book, any resort to guesswork or postmortem psychologizing. It is a sound method but in Flaubert's case leads to an odd effect. On the one hand, the author clearly presents the self-styled "bear" holed up in Normandy and slowly creating his meticulously crafted fiction. On the other hand, there is the noisy provincial with a taste for dirty words, whose forays into Paris were recorded by the Goncourt brothers with prissy disapproval. Mr. Lottman describes both these characters well, but there is no discernible connection between them. One is left with the feeling that there was a third Flaubert, who has remained unreachable by even the most thorough research.

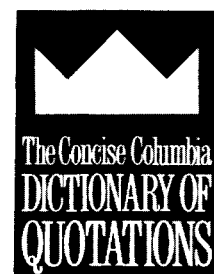
THE BLOODING by Joseph Wambaugh. Perigord/Morrow, \$18.95. The first Narborough Village rape-murder occurred in 1983, the second three years later. The Leicestershire constabulary, who had never given up on the first case, caught the killer in the second. Mr. Wambaugh's account of the affair is a good true-crime story and particularly interesting for the means by which the murderer was ultimately identified: the newly discovered method called genetic fingerprinting, which has nothing at all to do with fingerprints. To make it work,

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WHEN A NATION
OBSESSED WITH
MORE
DISCOVERS THAT
IT ISN'T
ENOUGH?

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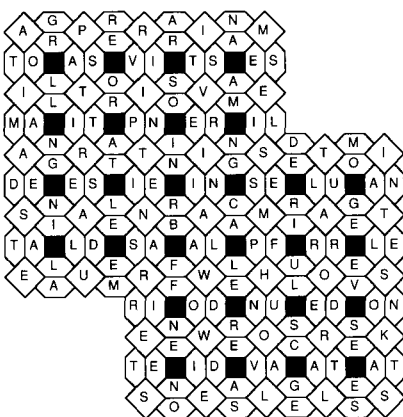
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Answers to the April Puzzles

"MOSAIC"

"A primitive artist is an amateur whose work sells."—Grandma Moses

1. G(R)OAT 2. G(RASP)ER 3. A(fa)R-RIVER
4. ARTISAN (anag.) 5. N-AMES 6. MAIL-LOT
7. TO(R)T-ILL-AS 8. PROVISION (anag.)
9. OVERMASTS (anag.) 10. S(EA) MILE
11. MAN-AGED 12. RESTA-TING 13. INPATIENT
- (anag.) 14. REINING IN (homoph.) 15. SEE-
- DL(IN)-GS 16. MO(U)LTED (anag. + u)
17. NAOM-I (*moan* rev.) 18. STAI(NE)D
19. LEAD LINES (anag.) 20. BASELINER
- (anag.) 21. CA-LAB-R(I)AN 22. CAM(P)FIRES
- (anag. + p) 23. IR(REGUL)AR (*Luger* rev.)
24. E(LEG)ANT (*neat* anag.) 25. AL-ATE
26. ME-DULL-A 27. AF(FIR)MERS (*frames*
- anag.) 28. W(ALL)E-D OFF 29. UNHELPFUL
- (anag.) 30. OVERRULED (anag.) 31. E(LE-
- VON)S (rev.) 32. T(E'EN)IER 33. EIDERDOWN
- (anag.) 34. C-AVER-NO-US (*on* rev.) 35. DES-
- CARTES (hidden) 36. TAKE-S ON (*Kate* anag.)
37. S(TEN)O 38. ONE-I'D-AS 39. SA(L)VAGE
40. LE(GAT)E'S 41. SE(A)TS



ACROSTIC NO. 45

"In spite of his suet [Fatty Arbuckle] was an agile man . . . [and] superb pie pitcher. . . . [He] was ambidextrous and had double vision like a T-formation quarterback. He could throw two pies at once in different directions, but he was not precise in this feat."

—Mack Sennett, *King of Comedy*

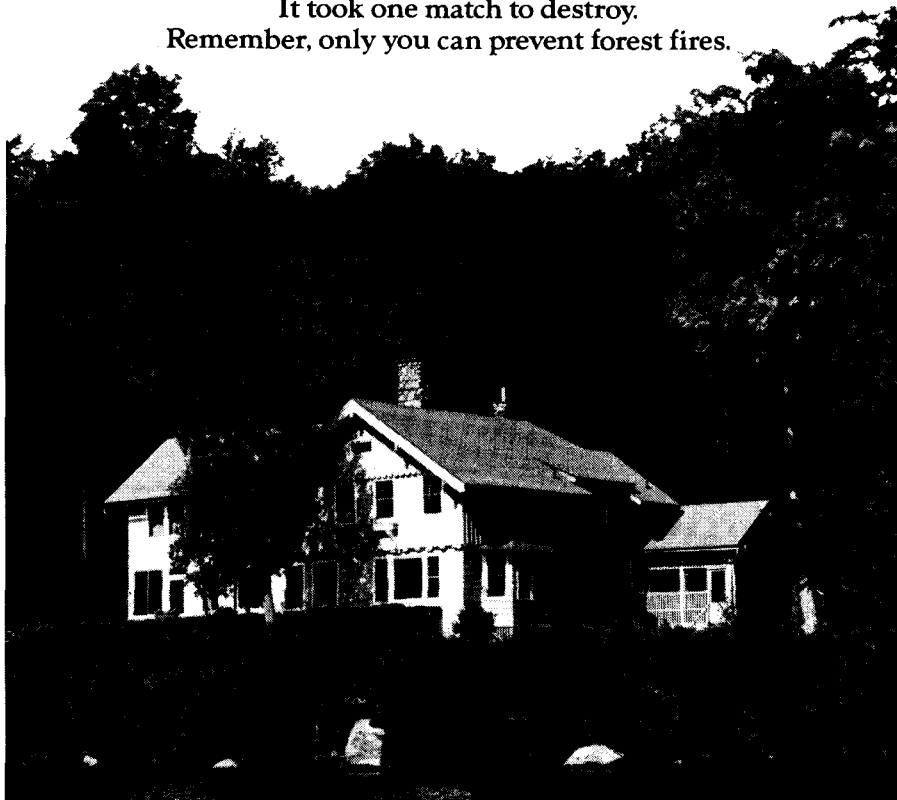


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the police had to get blood samples from a majority of the male population, an enterprise that provides considerable grim comedy.

THE ROAD THROUGH MIYAMA by *Leila Philip*. Random House, \$17.95. Ms. Philip, equipped with Japanese language and training at the wheel, apprenticed herself to an unorthodox but distinguished pottery maker in the remote ceramic center of Miyama. That a foreign woman should do such a thing was cause for amused astonishment among the locals. Ms. Philip's report of her experiences covers the history of the town, the art and agony of pottery making, and intriguing encounters with Japanese culture—events were sometimes totally surprising and sometimes very much like home. She enjoyed Miyama and its people, and so will readers of this quietly charming memoir.

THE WARRIOR QUEENS by *Antonia Fraser*. Knopf, \$22.95. The pattern of achievement that Ms. Fraser discerns in the careers of belligerent female rulers runs from Boadicea to Margaret Thatcher and remains basically similar all the way while differing widely in detail. Mrs. Thatcher smiting the foe from a scythe-wheeled chariot is unimaginable—but then, Boadicea's vehicle is imaginary, although her presence on the battlefield seemingly was not. The danger in a historical study of this type is monotony, and despite extensive research and excellent writing Ms. Fraser has not altogether evaded it.

THE PAINTINGS OF NOEL COWARD by *Sheridan Morley*. Philosophical Library, \$29.95. During his lifetime Coward kept very quiet about his painting, fearing that his work would be valued for his signature rather than for artistic merit. He was overmodest. The paintings reproduced in this book are not landmarks in the history of art, but those done in Jamaica have a striking directness and simplicity of vision and all the brilliant glitter of tropical light. They announce, loud and clear, that their maker loved what he saw and what he was doing. Mr. Morley's text is brisk and appreciative without becoming idolatrous.

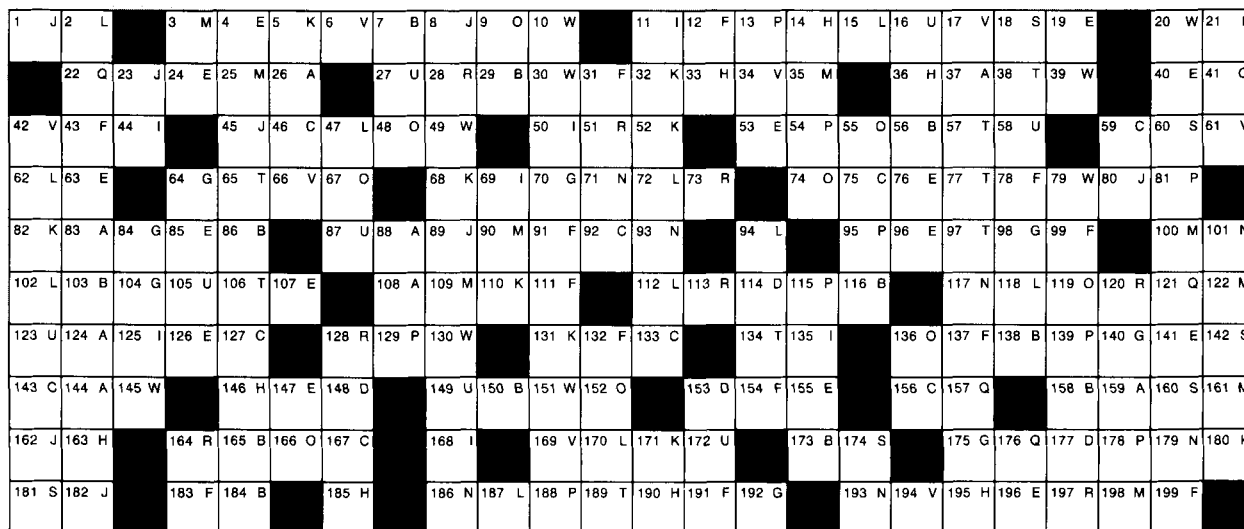
MORE LIKE US: Making America Great Again by *James Fallows*. Houghton Mifflin, \$18.95. Portions of this book originally appeared in *The Atlantic*.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

ACROSTIC No. 46

BY DOROTHY OSBORNE

The letters of clue answers, when put in the appropriately numbered squares, will spell out a quotation. The first letters of clue answers spell the author and source of the quotation.



The solution to Acrostic No. 45 appears on page 100.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>A. Du Maurier's evil hypnotist 108 83 124 26 37 159 88 144</p> <p>B. Easy to comprehend (hyph.) 165 184 150 116 103 29 173 158 56
7 138 86</p> <p>C. "Crocodile Rock" singer (2 wds.) 46 127 133 156 92 59 75 167 143</p> <p>D. Item thrown to the ground in challenge 177 153 114 148</p> <p>E. Thoroughly villainous (4 wds.) 96 53 19 40 107 76 4 141 155
147 63 24 126 85 196</p> <p>F. Barren Chilean region (2 wds.) 132 199 137 154 78 31 183 191 99
43 91 12 111</p> <p>G. Member of the chrysanthemum family used medicinally 140 84 98 104 175 70 192 64</p> <p>H. Dixieland style of trombone-playing 146 14 190 33 163 185 195 36</p> <p>I. Highly touted source of dietary fiber (2 wds.) 69 50 44 11 125 168 135</p> <p>J. Capital of Chad 162 182 45 23 1 89 80 8</p> <p>K. Showing no scruples; unabashed (hyph.) 32 5 110 52 131 171 68 82 180</p> | <p>L. Cincinnati Bengal post-touchdown dance (2 wds.) 94 62 15 72 2 112 118 187 21
102 47 170</p> <p>M. Fitful; intermittent 122 198 109 3 90 25 35 161 100</p> <p>N. Tracy Chapman song of 1988 (2 wds.) 71 101 186 93 117 193 179</p> <p>O. Mob rule 119 136 67 48 41 166 9 55 74 152</p> <p>P. Cause a disturbance (2 wds.) 54 178 188 81 13 95 115 139 129</p> <p>Q. Grouse; crab 22 121 176 157</p> <p>R. The government in Washington, D.C. (2 wds.) 113 51 28 120 73 164 128 197</p> <p>S. Apple with a rough brownish skin 142 60 18 174 181 160</p> <p>T. Brobdignagian 38 65 57 97 106 77 134 189</p> <p>U. Safety device for rafters (2 wds.) 172 105 16 58 149 87 27 123</p> <p>V. Battlefield of the Civil War 17 6 66 61 34 194 42 169</p> <p>W. Woody Allen's homage to the 1940s (2 wds.) 151 30 130 79 20 10 145 49 39</p> |
|---|---|

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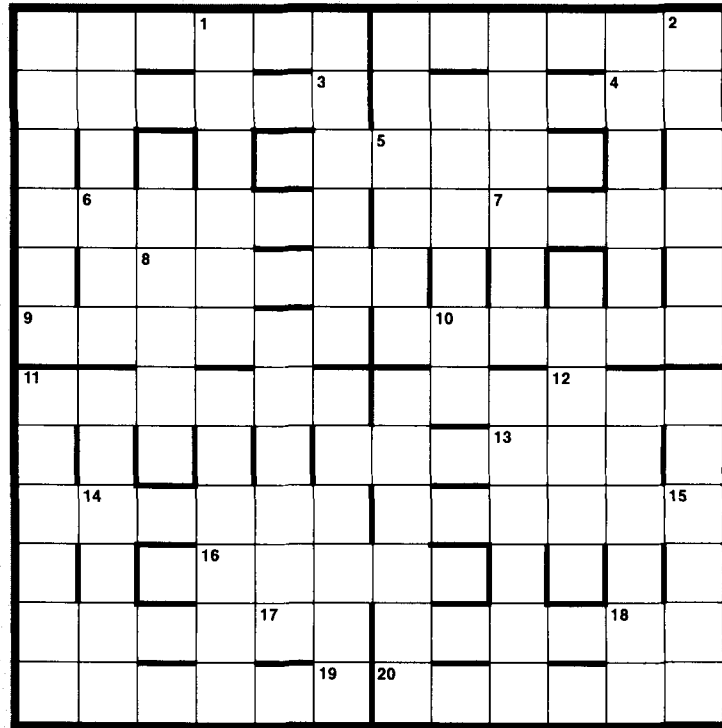
THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

CROSS CHECKING

(Acknowledgments to Henry Hook)

Clues for this puzzle's entries are given in pairs. Each pair of answers (all of which are six-letter words) intersects in the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram; either clue, Across or Down, may be given first. When all answers have been entered, a message to solvers will appear in the numbered squares, reading from 1 to 20. Answers include one proper noun.



The answers to last month's Puzzler appear on page 100.

CLUES

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Cross Checking, finally, has mate crossing
Glen takes shot with putter | 7. Set trap the wrong way for small creature
Game for all ages—try it out | 14. Stiff resistance encountered in thicker
Pitcher left after line drive |
| 2. Emissary had a meal after portion of a trip
Corrects this writer in margins | 8. North, in broadcast, deceived
Pup's grunt smothered by Italian official | 15. Strong drug takes perfect score
Spinning backward, spinner loses head |
| 3. Glimpse of animal with 50 tentacles causes terror
Priest stirred Solidarity | 9. Girl obstructs train
Behold Mae's bottom | 16. Novel about piano man's relative
Search all over for drink |
| 4. Container from Sumerian site held by young person
Court has a fit about uranium | 10. Follow alternative style
Senior members make wishes | 17. Alternate witness identified
Begins again with Descartes and Gilbert |
| 5. Guided around boat, had a ball
European land restricts right to twist | 11. Started to read newspaper section about New England
Circle marks awards | 18. Exclude Bird as injured
Group of nine heard some commercial |
| 6. Mailer flipped over near-flush
Shininess of blade obscured ring | 12. Hot liquids from well inside ooze back
Agent with less money | 19. Elegant curve in desert
Base captured by scheming deliberately |
| | 13. Strip tease bachelor planned
Dull to be traveling around America | 20. Upstanding types giving orders around gym
Rear of ship in run-down fleet |

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to 'The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

EDWARD A. WEEKS

1898–1989

AT THE BANQUET CELEBRATING THE HUNDREDTH anniversary of *The Atlantic Monthly*, in 1957, when Edward Weeks rose to address the staff of the publishing enterprise that he had already served for more than thirty years, he announced cheerfully that there were only three unachieved prizes he desired: a gold-headed cane, a white bulldog, and a blonde mistress. The pose was characteristically breezy and charming. As it happens, Ted Weeks's career at *The Atlantic* was merely at its midpoint; he served the magazine for another thirty years. His last day at *The Atlantic*—a warm, sunny Thursday last March—was spent reading books and writing letters to friends. The next day he drove with his wife of eighteen years, Phoebe-Lou Adams, to their weekend home, in Thompson, Connecticut. On Saturday, at the age of ninety-one, Edward Weeks died peacefully in his sleep.

The late Janet Flanner called Weeks "a great personality." That he was. In his memoirs, *My Green Age*, as in the dozen or so other books that he wrote during a remarkably vigorous career, Weeks cut a figure of gaiety and grace. As a young book salesman for Horace Liveright, in the 1920s, he became famous for winning over the formidable buyer for R. H. Macy's while cradling a tennis racket under his arm. During the First World War, Weeks dropped out of Cornell to drive an American Field Service ambulance in France, and received a Croix de Guerre. His courtship of his first wife, Frederica ("Fritzy") Watriss, culminated in marriage after his move to Boston, where, in 1924, at the age of twenty-six, Weeks joined the staff of Ellery Sedgwick's *Atlantic Monthly*. In 1928 Weeks was assigned to the book-publishing arm of the Atlantic Monthly Company, the Atlantic Monthly Press, where he sponsored the books of many of the most interesting writers of his generation—from Charles Nordhoff and James Hall (*Mutiny on the Bounty*) and James Hilton (*Good-bye, Mr. Chips*) to Walter Lippmann, Samuel Eliot Morison, George F. Kennan, and Catherine Drinker Bowen.

In 1938, upon Ellery Sedgwick's retirement, Weeks became the ninth editor of *The Atlantic*. If *The Atlantic*, in its one hundred and thirty-two years, has been modern in whatever age it has found itself, this has been through the efforts of each editor to pull the magazine ahead of its time. Weeks, the first editor to achieve maturity in the formative years of the twentieth century, was quick to orient *The Atlantic* toward the problems looming in the decades ahead. Colonialism, race relations, the future of science and technology, the lack of American awareness of the challenges posed by different cultures—these subjects, not to mention fiction and poetry by important new writers, were hallmarks of Weeks's years as editor. Weeks also made himself a celebrity. He went on the lecture circuit, not only to make himself visible but to make *The Atlantic* visible. He had two weekly shows on network ra-

dio—*Meet Mr. Weeks*, on NBC, and *Editor at Home*, on ABC. He wrote a monthly column called "The Peripatetic Review," which told as much about his work and his travels as it did about the books under review. And he traveled widely. Editorial meetings at *The Atlantic*, which came at odd intervals, tended to fall hard on the heels of some particularly exciting journey—to the Soviet Union, say. At these times the lecturer in Weeks would take over, and he would share his recent adventure with his not-quite-so-peripatetic staff.

Edward Weeks was as courtly a man as one can imagine, and assured in his tastes. "Ted," said a colleague of several decades one day recently, as Weeks emerged from the *Atlantic* offices, "is that a new suit?" "My boy," Weeks said, to this whippersnapper of fifty-five, "I bought this in London in 1939." To young people at *The Atlantic* Weeks's very presence was a spur to high standards and a reminder that a world we thought lost may in fact yet survive. At lunch or dinner, or at one of the clubs he enjoyed frequenting in Boston and New York, Weeks could draw out the sagest of experts and commentators with shrewdly phrased questions and his concentrated attention. Weeks never hesitated to praise, and he put the praise at the beginning of a letter, not at the end. His was the age of dictation, with a patient stenographer attendant upon his will, and every member of his staff can recall shifting from foot to foot at the door of his office while Weeks, hawk-like and ruminative, reposed in his chair by the window and slowly uttered a letter whose grace and warmth made it sound more personal than it had any need to be. Over and over rejections would be cushioned with the words "I am writing in friendly candor, as I know you would have me do."

Ted Weeks gave much of his time to the United Negro College Fund, to Harvard, where he earned his degree, and to his friends. To *The Atlantic* he gave, further, a spirit that enabled it to recover from the Depression and to secure its place in the ranks of magazines that are truly national in character. Even after his retirement as editor in chief, in 1966, he continued to edit books for nearly twenty years.

In his early years Weeks's favorite relaxation was tennis. After the age of forty he laid down the tennis racket in favor of the golf club, and he carried an impressively low handicap into his ninth decade. But throughout his life he pursued one of the great traditional avocations of the New England editor: fly-fishing, which he practiced in pond and stream. Weeks spent his last afternoon talking with an old friend in Thompson about fishing, and planning a fishing trip. He was the sort of man who always looked ahead; who once, a colleague remembers, sought to provide relief from the August heat by noting that work on the November issue was about to begin. Ted Weeks was, we assume, looking ahead when he slipped off forever to sleep. □



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